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THE

M A N

OF

FORTY CROWNS.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF

M. DE VOLTAIRE. (Z. M. A. de)



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1851

The M A N
O F
F O R T Y C R O W N S.

AN old man who is for ever *pitying the present times and extolling the past*, was saying to me, Friend, France is not so rich as it was under Henry the IVth. And why ? Because the lands are not so well cultivated ; because hands are wanting for the cultivation ; and because the day-labourer having raised the price of his work, many land-owners let their inheritances lie fallow.

Whence comes this scarcity of hands ? From this, that whoever finds in himself any thing of a spirit of industry ; takes up the trades of imbroiderer, chaser, watch-maker, silk-weaver, attorney, or divine. It is also because the revocation of the Edict of Nantes has left a great void in

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the kingdom ; because nuns and beggars of all kinds have greatly multiplied ; because the people in general avoid as much as possible the hard labour of cultivation, for which we are born, by God's destination, and which we have rendered ignominious by our own opinions, so very wise are we.

Another cause of our poverty lies in our new wants. We must pay our neighbours four millions of livres (*) upon one article, and five or six upon another ; such for example as stuffing up our nose a stinking powder come from America ; our coffee, tea, chocolate, cochineal, indigo, spices, cost us above sixty millions a year. All these were unknown to us in the reign of Henry the IVth, except the spices, of which, however, the consumption was not near so great as it is now. We burn a hundred times more wax-lights than were burnt then ; and we get more than the half of the wax from foreign countries, because we neglect our own hives. We see a hundred times more diamonds

(*) A million is about 43,750l. sterling.

in the ears, round the necks, and on the hands of our city-ladies of Paris, and other great towns, than were worn by all the ladies of Henry the IVth's court, the Queen included. Almost all these superfluities are necessarily paid for with ready specie.

Observe especially that we pay to foreigners above fifteen millions of annuities on the *Hotel-de-Ville*; and that Henry IV. on his Accession, having found two millions of debt in all on this imaginary *Hotel*, very wisely paid off a part to ease the state of this burthen.

Consider that our civil wars were the occasion of the treasures of Mexico being poured into the kingdom, when Don Philip *el Discreto* took it into his head to buy France, and that since that time, our foreign wars have eased us of a good half of our money.

These are partly the causes of our poverty; a poverty which we hide under varnished cielings, or with the help of our dealers in fashions: we are poor with taste. There are some officers of revenue, there are contractors or jobbers, there are

merchants, very rich ; their children, their sons-in-law, are very rich ; the nation in general is not so.

This old man's discourse, well or ill grounded, made a deep impression on me ; for the curate of my parish, who had always had a friendship for me, had taught me a little of geometry and of history ; and I begin to reflect a little, which is very rare in my province. I do not know whether he was right or not in every thing, but being myself very poor, I could very easily believe that I had a great many companions of misery (*).

D I S-

(*) Madam de Maintenon, who was a very sensible woman in every point, except that on which she used to consult that chicaning shuffler her confessor the abbot Gobelin ; Madam de Maintenon, in one of her letters, states the account of her brother and his wife's housekeeping in 1680 : They had to pay the rent of a pleasant house ; they had ten servants to maintain, four horses, and two coachmen. They sat down every day to a good dinner. Madam de Maintenon allows for all this nine thousand livres a year, [not quite 400*l.* a year] and adds three thousand more for play, public entertainments, for the fancies, and magnificence of both

D I S A S T E R.

OF

The MAN of FORTY CROWNS.

I Very readily make known to the *Universe*, that I have a landed estate which would bring me in clear forty crowns a year (*), were it not for the tax laid on it.

There came forth several edicts from certain persons, who, having nothing better to do, govern the state at their fire-side. The preamble of these edicts was, "that the legislative and executive was born, "*Jure divino*, the co-proprietor of my

both husband and wife. At present, there would be required about forty thousand livres a year to lead such a life in Paris. In the time of Henry the IVth six thousand would have served. This instance is proof enough that the old man did not absolutely doat.

(Translator's note.) A crown, in this sense, is what the French call a *petit ecu de trois livres*; eight of them are about one pound sterling.

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"land ;"

“land ;” and that I owe it at least the half of what I possess. The enormity of the swallow of this same legislative and executive power made me bless myself. What would it be if that power which presides over “ the essential order of society,” was to take the whole of my little estate ? The one is still more divine than the other.

The comptroller general knows that I used to pay, in all, but twelve livres ; that even this was a heavy burthen on me, and that I should have sunk under it, if God had not given me the talent of making wicker baskets, which helped to carry me through my streights. But how should I, on a sudden, be able to give the king twenty crowns ?

The new ministers also said in their preamble, that it was not fit to tax any thing but the land, because every thing arises from the land, even rain itself, and consequently that nothing was properly liable to taxation, but the fruits of the land.

During the last war, one of their collectors came to my house, and demanded
of

of me for my quota three measures of corn, and a sack of beans, the whole worth twenty crowns, to maintain the war then a making, and of which I never knew the reason, having only heard it said that there was nothing to be got by it for our country, and a great deal to lose. As I had not at that time or corn, or beans, or money, the legislative and executive power had me dragged to prison; and the war went on as well as it could.

On my release from my dungeon, being nothing but skin and bone, who should I meet but a jolly fresh coloured man in a coach and six? He had six footmen, to each of whom he gave for his wages more than the double of my revenue. His head-steward, who by the way, looked in as good plight as himself, had of him a salary of two thousand livres, and robbed him every year of twenty thousand more. His mistress had in six months stood him in forty thousand crowns. I had formerly known him when he was less well to pass than myself. He owned, by way of comfort to me, that he

enjoyed four hundred thousand livres a year, I suppose then, said I, that you pay out of this income two hundred thousand to the state, to help to support that advantageous war we are carrying on ; since I, who have but just a hundred and twenty livres a year, am obliged to pay half of them.

I ! (said he,) I contribute to the wants of the state ! you are jesting, sure, my friend. I have inherited from an uncle his fortune of eight millions, which he got at Cadiz and at Surat ? I have not a foot of land, my estate lies in government-contracts, and in the funds. I owe the state nothing. It is for you to give half of your subsistence, you who are a proprietor of land. Do not you see, that if the minister of the revenue was to require any thing of me in aid of our country, he would be a blockhead, that could not calculate : for every thing is the produce of the land. Money, and the paper-currency are nothing but pledges of exchange. Instead of staking on a card at *Pharaoh*, a hundred measures of corn, a hundred oxen, a thousand sheep, and two hundred sacks of oats, I play *rouleaux* of gold,

gold, which represent those filthy commodities. If after having laid the sole tax, the tax that is to supply the place of all others, on those commodities, the government was to ask money of me, do not you see, that this would be a double load ? that it would be asking the same thing twice over ? My uncle sold at Cadiz to the amount of two millions of your corn, and of two millions of stuffs made of your wool ; upon these two articles he gained cent. per cent. you must easily think that this profit came out of lands already taxed ; what my uncle bought for ten pence of you, he sold again for above fifty livres at Mexico ; and thus he made a shift to return to his own country with eight millions clear.

You must be sensible then, that it would be a horrid injustice to redemand of him a few farthings on the ten pence he paid you. If twenty nephews like me, whose uncles had gained each eight millions at Buenos-Ayres, at Lima, at Surat, or at Pondicherry, were, in the urgent necessities of the state, to lend each to it only two hundred thousand livres, that would

would produce four millions. But what a horror would that be! Pay then you, my friend, who enjoy quietly the neat and clear revenue of forty crowns; serve your country well, come now and then to dine with my servants in livery.

This plausible discourse made me reflect a good deal, but I cannot say it much comforted me.

CONVERSATION WITH A GEOMETRICIAN.

IT sometimes happens that a man has no answer to make, and yet is not persuaded: he is overthrown without the power of being convinced. He feels at the bottom of his heart a scruple, a repugnance which hinders him from believing what has been proved to him. A Geometrician demonstrates to you, that between a circle and a tangent, you may thrid a number of curves, and yet cannot get

get one streight line to pass. Your eyes, your reason tell you the contrary. The Geometrician gravely answers you, that it is an infinitesimal of the second order. You stare in stupid silence, and quit the field all astonished, without having any clear idea, without comprehending any thing, and without having any reply to make.

Consult but a Geometrician of more candor, and he explains the mystery to you. We suppose, (says he,) what cannot be in nature, lines which have length without breadth. Naturally and philosophically speaking, it is impossible for one real line to penetrate another. No curve, nor no right line can pass between two real lines that touch one another. Those theorems that puzzle you are but sports of the imagination, ideal chimeras. Whereas true geometry is the art of measuring things actually existent.

I was perfectly well satisfied with the confession of this sensible Mathematician, and, with all my misfortune, could not help laughing, on my learning that there was a quackery even in that science,
which

which is called the Sublime Science. My Geometrician was a kind of philosophical patriot, who had deigned to chat with me sometimes in my cottage. I said to him, Sir, you have tried to enlighten the cockneys of Paris, on a point of the greatest concern to mankind, the duration of the human life. It is to you alone that the ministry owes its knowledge of the due rate of annuities for lives, according to the different ages. You have proposed to furnish the houses in town with what water they may want, and to deliver us, at length, from the shame and ridicule of hearing water cried about the streets, and of hearing women inclosed within an oblong hoop, carrying two pails of water, both together of about thirty pounds weight, up to a fourth story, near a privy.—Be so good, in the name of friendship, to tell me, how many two-handed bipeds there may be in France.

The Geometrician.

It is assumed, that there may be about twenty millions, and I am willing to adopt
this

this calculate as the most probable (a), till it can be verified, which it would be very easy to do, and which however, has not hitherto been done, because *one does not always think of every thing.*

The Man of Forty Crowns.

How many acres (*), think you, the whole territories of France contain?

The Geometrician.

One hundred and thirty millions, of which almost the half is in roads, in towns, in villages, moors, heaths, marshes, sands, barren lands, useless convents, gardens of more pleasure than profit, uncultivated ground, and bad grounds ill cultivated. We might reduce all the land which yields good returns to seventy

[a] This is proved by the Reports made by the Super-Intendants at the end of the seventeenth century, combined with the numbering by chimnies, performed in 1753. by order of the Count d'Argenson, and especially with the very exact work of Mons. Mezence, done under the inspection of the Super-Intendant Mons. de la Michaudiere, a very intelligent person.

[*] The French acre differs from ours. It contains 100 perches square, of 18 feet each; ours about half as much more.

five millions of square acres; but let us state them at fourscore millions. One cannot do too much for one's country.

The Man of Forty Crowns.

How much may you think each acre brings in yearly, one year with another, in corn, seeds of all kinds, wine, fish-ponds, wood, metals, cattle, fruit, wool, silk, oil, milk, clear of all charges, without reckoning the tax?

The Geomitrician.

Why, if they produce each twenty five livres, (something above twenty shillings,) it is a great deal; but, not to discourage our countrymen, let us put them at thirty livres. There are acres which produce constantly regenerating value, and which are estimated at 300 livres: there are others which only produce 3 livres. The mean proportion between 3 and 300 is 30; for you must allow that 3 are to 30 as 30 are to 300. If indeed there were comparatively many acres at 30 livres, and very few at 300, our account would not hold good; but, once more, I would not be over-punctilious.

The

The Man of Forty Crowns.

Well, Sir ; how much will these four-score millions of acres yield of revenue, estimated in money ?

The Geometrician.

The account is ready made ; they will produce two thousand four hundred millions of numerary livres of the present currency.

The Man of Forty Crowns.

I have read that Solomon possessed, of his own property, twenty-five thousand millions of livres, in ready money ; and certainly there are not two thousand four hundred millions of specie circulating in France, which, I am told, is much greater and much richer than Solomon's country.

The Geometrician.

There lies the mystery. There may be about nine hundred millions circulating throughout the Kingdom ; and this money, passing from hand to hand, is sufficient to pay for all the produce of the land, and of industry ; the same crown may pass ten times from the pocket of the cultivator, into that of the alehouse-keeper, and of the tax-gatherer.

The

The Man of Forty Crowns.

I apprehend you. But you told me that we are, in all, about twenty millions of inhabitants, men, women, old and young. How much, pray, do you allow for each?

The Geometrician.

One hundred and twenty livres, or forty crowns.

The Man of Forty Crowns.

You have just guessed my revenue. I have four acres, which, reckoning the fallow years with those of produce, bring me in one hundred and twenty livres; which is little enough, God knows.

What! If every individual was, in the golden age, to have his contingent, would that be no more than five louis d'ors (about five guineas) a year?

The Geometrician.

Certainly not, according to our calculation, which I have a little amplified. Such is the state of human nature. Our life and our fortune have narrow limits: In Paris they do not, one with another, live above twenty two or twenty three years, and, one with another, have not,

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at the most, above a hundred and twenty livres a year to spend. So that your food, your rayment, your lodging, your moveables, are all represented by the sum of 120 livres.

The Man of Forty Crowns.

Alas! What have I done to you, that you thus abridge me of my fortune and life? Can it then be true, that I have but three and twenty years to live, unless I rob my fellow-creatures of their share?

The Geometrician.

This is incontestable in the good city of Paris. But from these twenty-three years you must deduct ten, at the least, for your childhood, as childhood is not an enjoyment of life; it is a preparation; it is the porch of the edifice; it is the tree that has not yet given fruits; it is the dawn of a day. Then again from the thirteen years, which remain to you, deduct the time of sleep, and that of tiresomeness of life; and that will be at least a moiety. You will then have six years and a half left to pass in vexation, in pain, some pleasures, and in hopes.

The

The Man of Forty Crowns.

Merciful heaven ! at this rate, your account does not allow us above three years of tolerable existence.

The Geometrician.

That is no fault of mine. Nature cares very little for individuals. There are other insects which do not live above one day, but of which the species is perpetual. Nature resembles those great Princes, who reckon as nothing the loss of four hundred thousand men, so as they but accomplish their august designs.

The Man of Forty Crowns.

Forty crowns and three years of life ! What resource can you imagine against two such curses ?

The Geometrician.

As to life, it would be requisite to render the air of Paris more pure ; that men should eat less and use more exercise ; that mothers should suckle their own children ; that people should be no longer so ill advised as to dread inoculation. This is what I have already said ; and as to fortune, why, even marry and get sons and daughters.

The

The Man of Forty Crowns.

How! Can the way to live more at ease be to associate to my own bad circumstances those of others?

The Geometrician.

Five or six bad circumstances put together form a tolerable establishment. Get a good wife, and we will say only two sons and two daughters, this will make seven hundred and twenty livres for your little family, that is to say, if distributive justice was to take place, and each individual had an hundred and twenty livres a year. Your children, in their infancy, stand you in almost nothing; when grown up they will ease and help you; their mutual aid will save you a great part of your expences, and you may live very happily, like a philosopher; always provided that those worthy gentlemen who govern the state have not the barbarity to extort from each of you twenty crowns a year. But the misfortune is, we are no longer in the golden age, where the men, born all equals, had an equal part in the nutritive productions of uncultivated land. The
case

case is now far from being so good an one, as that every two handed biped possesses land to the value of an hundred and twenty livres a year.

The Man of Forty Crowns.

'Sdeath! you ruin us. You said but just now, that in a country of fourscore millions of acres of good enough land, and twenty millions of inhabitants, each of them ought to enjoy an hundred and twenty livres a year, and now you take them away from us again!

The Geometrician.

I was computing according to the registers of the golden age, but we must reckon according to that of iron. There are many inhabitants who have but the value of ten crowns a year, others no more than four or five, and above six millions of men who have absolutely nothing.

The Man of Forty Crowns.

Nothing! Why they would perish of hunger in three days time.

The Geometrician.

Not in the least: the others who possess their portions, set them to work, and share

share with them. It is out of this disposition that the pay comes of the divine, the confectioner, the apothecary, the preacher, the actor, the attorney, and the hackney-coachman. You thought yourself very ill off, to have no more than an hundred and twenty livres a year, reduced to an hundred and eight by your tax of twelve livres : but consider the soldiers, who devote their blood to their country ; at the rate of fourpence a day, they have not above sixty three livres a year for their livelihood, and yet they make a comfortable shift, by a number of them joining their little stock and living in common.

The Man of Forty Crowns.

So that an Ex-Jesuit has more than five times the pay of a soldier. And yet the soldiers have done more service to the state under the eyes of the king at Fontenoy, at Laufelt, at the siege of Fribourg, than the reverend father La Valette ever did in his life.

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The Geometrician.

Nothing can be truer : Nay, every one of these turned adrift Jesuits, being now become free, has more to spend than what he cost his convent. There are even of them who have gained a good deal of money by scribbling pamphlets against the Parliaments, as for example, the reverend Father Patouillet, and the reverend Father Monote. In short, in this world every one sets his wits to work for a livelihood. One is at the head of a manufacture of stuffs; another of porcelain; another undertakes the opera; another the ecclesiastical gazette; another a tragedy in familiar life, or a novel or romance in the English taste; this maintains the stationer, the ink-maker, the book seller, the hawker, who might else be reduced to beggary. There is nothing, then, but the restitution of the hundred and twenty livres to those who have nothing, that makes the state flourish.

The Man of Forty Crowns.

A pretty way of flourishing truly!

The

The Geometrician.

And yet there is no other. In every country it is the rich that enable the poor to live. This is the sole source of the industry of commerce. The more industrious a nation itself is, the more it gains from foreign ones. Could we, on our foreign trade, get ten millions a year by the balance in our favour, there would, in twenty years, be two hundred millions the more in the nation: this would afford ten livres a head more, on the supposition of an equitable distribution; that is to say, that the dealers would make each poor person earn ten livres the more, once paid, in the hopes of making still more considerable gains. But commerce, like the fertility of the earth, has its bounds, otherwise its progression would be *ad infinitum*: nor, besides, is it clear, that the balance of our trade is constantly favourable to us: there are times in which we lose.

The Man of forty Crowns.

I have heard much talk of population. Were we to take it into our heads to beget double the number of children we

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now do, were our country doubly peopled to what it now is, so that we had forty millions of inhabitants instead of twenty, what would be the consequence?

The Geometrician.

It would be this: that one with another each would have, instead of forty, but twenty crowns to live upon; or that the land should produce the double of what it now does; or that there should be double the number of poor; or that there should be the double of the national industry, or of gain from foreign countries; or that half of the people should be sent to America; or that one half of the nation should eat the other.

The Man of forty Crowns.

Let us then remain satisfied with our hundred and twenty livres a head, distributed as it shall please the Lord. Yet this situation is a sad one, and your iron age is of cursed hard ware.

The Geometrician.

There is no nation that is better off; and there are many that are worse. Do you believe that there is in the north wherewithall to afford to each inhabitant the

the value of an hundred and twenty of our livres a year? If they had had the equivalent of this, the Huns, the Vandals, and the Franks would not have deserted their country, in quest of establishments elsewhere, which they carried, fire and sword in hand.

The Man of forty Crowns.

If I was to listen to you, you would persuade me presently that I am happy with my hundred and twenty livres.

The Geometrician.

If you would but think yourself happy, in such a case you would be so.

The Man of forty crowns.

A man cannot imagine what actually is not, unless he were mad.

The Geometrician.

I have already told you, that in order to be more at your ease, and more happy than you are, you should take a wife; to which I tack, however, this clause, that she has as well as you, one hundred and twenty livres a year; that is to say, four acres at ten crowns an acre. The antient Romans had each but one. If your chil-

dren are industrious, they can each earn as much by their working for others.

The Man of forty crowns.

So that they may get money, without others losing it.

The Geometrician.

Such is the law of all nations : there is no living but on these terms.

The Man of forty crowns.

And must my wife and I give each of us the half of our produce to the legislative and executive power, and the new ministers of state rob us of the price of our hard labor, and of the substance of our poor children, before they are able to get their livelihood ? Pray, tell me, how much money will these new ministers of ours bring into the king's coffers, on the foot of this *Jure divino* system ?

The Geometrician.

You pay twenty crowns on four acres, which bring you in forty. A rich man, who possesses four hundred acres will, by the new tariff, pay two thousand crowns ; and the whole fourscore millions of acres will yield to the king twelve hundred millions of livres a year, or four hundred millions of crowns.

The

The Man of forty crowns.

That appears to me impracticable and impossible.

The Geometrician.

And very much in the right you are to think so : and this impossibility is a geometrical demonstration that there is a fundamental defect in the calculate of our new ministers.

The man of forty crowns.

Is not there also demonstrably a prodigious injustice in taking from me the half of my corn, of my hemp, of the wool of my sheep, &c. and, at the same time, to require no aid from those who shall have gained ten, twenty, or thirty thousand livres a year, by my hemp, of which they will have made linnen, by my wool, of which they will have made cloth, by my corn, which they will have sold at so much more than it cost them ?

The Geometrician.

The injustice of this administration is as evident as its calculate is erroneous. It is right to favor industry ; but opulent industry ought to contribute to support the state. This industry will have cer-

tainly taken from you a part of your one hundred and twenty livres, and appropriated that part to itself, in selling you your shirts and your coat twenty times dearer than they would have cost you, if you had made them yourself. The manufacturer who shall have enriched himself, at your expence, will, I allow, have also paid wages to his workmen, who had nothing of themselves, but he will every year, have sunk and put by a sum that will, at length, have produced to him, thirty thousand livres a year. This fortune then he will have acquired at your expence. Nor can you ever sell him the produce of your land dear enough to reimburse you what he will have got by you ; for were you to attempt such an advance of your price, he would procure what he wanted cheaper from other countries. A proof of which is, that he remains constantly possessor of his thirty thousand livres a year, and you of your one hundred and twenty livres, which often diminish, instead of increasing.

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It is then necessary and equitable, that the refined industry of the trader should pay more than the gross industry of the farmer. The same is to be said of the collectors of the revenue. Your tax had hitherto been of twelve livres before that our great ministers were pleased to take from you twenty crowns. On these twelve livres the collector retained ten pence or ten *sols* for himself. If in your province there were five hundred thousand souls, he will have gained two hundred and fifty thousand livres a year. Suppose he spends fifty thousand, it is clear, that at the end of ten years he will be two millions in pocket. It is then but just, that he should contribute his proportion, otherwise, every thing would be perverted and go to ruin.

The Man of forty crowns.

I am glad, however, you have taxed the officer of the revenue; that is some relief to my imagination. But since he has so well increased his superfluity, how shall I do to augment my small modicum?

The Geometrician.

I have already told you, by marrying, by laboring, by trying to procure from your land some sheaves more of corn than what it has been used to produce to you.

The Man of forty crowns.

Well! granted then that I shall have been duly industrious; that all my countrymen will have been so too; and that the legislative and executive power shall have received a good round tax, how much will the nation have gained at the end of the year?

The Geometrician.

Nothing at all; unless it shall have carried on a profitable foreign trade; but life will have been more commodious in it. Every one will, respectively, in proportion, have had more cloaths, more linen, more moveables than he had before. There will have been in the nation a more abundant circulation. The wages will have been, in process of time, more augmented, nearly in proportion to the number of the sheaves of corn, of the tods
of

of wool, of the ox-hides, of the deer and goats, that will have been employed, of the clusters of grapes that will have been squeezed in the wine-press. More of the value of commodities will have been paid to the king in money, and the king will have returned more value to those he will have employed under his orders ; but there will not be half-a-crown the more in the kingdom.

The Man of forty crowns.

What will then remain to the government at the end of the year ?

The Geometrician.

Once more nothing. This is the case of government in general. It never lays by any thing : it will have got its living, that is to say, its food, raiment, lodging, moveables ; the subject will have done so too : where a government amasses treasure, it will have squeezed from the circulation so much money as it will have amassed. It will have made so many wretched as it will have put by forty crowns in its coffers.

The Man of forty crowns.

At this rate then, Henry IV. was but a mean spirited wretch, a miser, a plunderer ; for I have been told that he had chested up, in the Bastile, above fifty millions of livres according to our present currency.

The Geometrician.

He was a man as good, and as prudent, as he was brave. He was preparing to make a just war, and by his amassing in his coffers twenty two millions of the currency of that time, besides which he had twenty more to receive, which he left in circulation, he spared the people above a hundred millions that it would have cost, if he had not taken those useful measures. He made himself morally sure of the success against an enemy who had not taken the like precautions. The calculate of probabilities was prodigiously in his favor. His twenty two millions, in bank, proved that there was then in this kingdom twenty two millions of surplusage of the territorial produce, so that no-one was a sufferer.

The Man of forty crowns.

My old man then told me but the truth, when he said that the subject was in proportion more rich under the administration of the Duke of Sully than under that of our new ministers, who had laid on the *single tax*, the *sole tax*, who, out of my forty crowns have taken away twenty. Pray, tell me, is there any nation in the world besides, that enjoys this precious advantage of the *sole tax*?

The Geometrician.

Not one opulent nation. The English, who are not much given to laughing, could not, however, help bursting out, when they heard that men of parts, among us, had proposed this kind of administration. The Chinese exact a tax from all the foreign trading ships that resort to Canton. The Dutch pay, at Nangazacki, when they are received at Japan, under pretext that they are not Christians. The Laplanders, and the Samoieds, are indeed subjected to a sole tax in fables or marten-skins; the republic of St. Marino pays nothing more than tythes for
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the maintenance of that state in its splendor.

There is in Europe, a nation celebrated for its equity and its valor, that pays no tax. This is Switzerland. But thus it has happened. The people have put themselves in the place of the Dukes of Austria and of Zeringue ; the small cantons are democratical, and very poor : each inhabitant pays but a trifling sum towards the support of his little republic. In the rich cantons, the people are charged, for the state, with those duties which the Archdukes of Austria, and the Lords of the Land used to exact : the Protestant cantons are, in proportion, twice as rich as the Catholics, because the state, in the first, possesses the lands of the monks. Those who were formerly subjects to the Archdukes of Austria, to the Dukes of Zeringue, and to the monks, are now the subjects of their own country. They pay to that country the same tythes, the same fines of alienation, that they paid to their former masters ; and as the subjects, in general, have very little trade, their merchandise is liable to no charges,
except

except some small staple-duties. The men make a trade of their courage, in their dealings with foreign powers, and sell themselves for a certain term of years, which brings some money into their country at our expence; and this example is as singular an one in the civilised world, as is the sole tax now laid on by your new legislators.

The Man of forty crowns.

So, Sir, that the Swiss are not plundered *Jure divino*, of one half of their goods; and he that has four cows is not obliged to give two of them to the state?

The Geometrician.

Undoubtedly, not. In one canton, upon thirteen tons of wine, they pay one, and drink the other twelve. In another canton, they pay the twelfth, and drink the remaining eleven.

The Man of forty crowns.

Why, am not I a Swiss? that cursed tax, that has reduced me to beggary! But then again, three or four hundred taxes of which the bare names it is impossible for me to retain or pronounce, are they more just and more tolerable? Was there

there ever a legislator, who in founding a state, could imagine to create counsellors to the king, coalmeasures, gaugers of wine, measurers of wood, searchers of hogs tongues, comptrollers of salt butter? Or to maintain an army of rascals twice as numerous as that of Alexander, commanded by sixty generals who lay the country under contribution, who gain, every day, signal victories, who take prisoners, and who sometimes sacrifice them in the air, or on a boarded stage, as the antient Scythians did, according to what my vicar told me?

Now, was such a legislation, against which so many outcries were raised, and which caused the shedding so many tears, much better than the new substituted one, which, at one stroke, cleanly and quietly takes away half of my subsistence? I am afraid, that on a fair liquidation, it will be found that under the antient system of the revenue, they used to take, at times and in detail, three quarters of it.

The Geometrician.

Iliacos intra muros peccatur et extra.

Est modus in rebus. Caveas ne quid nimis.

The

The Man of forty crowns.

I have learnt a little of history, and something of geometry ; but I do not understand a word of Latin.

The Geometrician.

The sense is, pretty nearly, as follows,
There is wrong on both sides. Keep to a medium in every thing. Nothing too much.

The Man of forty crowns.

I say, Nothing too much ; that is my situation ; but the worst of it is, I have not enough.

The Geometrician.

I allow that you must perish of want, and I too, and the state too, if the new administration should continue only two years longer ; but it is hoped heaven will have mercy on us.

The Man of forty crowns.

We pass our lives in hope, and die hoping to the last. Adieu, Sir, you have enlightened me, but my heart is grieved.

The Geometrician.

That is often the fruit of knowledge.

ADVEN-

ADVENTURE WITH

A CARMELITE.

WHEN I had thanked the academician of the academy of sciences, for his having set me right, I went away quite out of heart, praising Providence, but muttering between my teeth those doleful words : *What ! to have no more than twenty crowns a year to live on, nor more than twenty two years to live !* Alas ! may our life be yet shorter, since it is to be so miserable !

As I was saying this, I found myself just over-against a superb house. Already was I feeling myself pressed by hunger. I had not so much as the hundred and twentieth part of the sum that by right belongs to each individual. But as soon as I was told that this was the palace of the reverend fathers, the bare-footed Carmelites, I conceived great hopes, and said to myself, since these saints are
humble

humble enough to go bare-footed, they will be charitable enough to give me a dinner.

I rang. A Carmelite came to the door, "What would you please to have, my son?"—A morsel of bread, my reverend father : the new edicts have stripped me of every thing.—"Son, we ourselves beg charity, we do not bestow it."—What ! while your holy institute forbids you to wear shoes, you have the house of a prince, and you refuse me a meal !—"My son, it is true, we go without stockings and shoes ; that is an expence the less : we feel no more cold in our feet than in our hands ; and if our holy institute had enjoined us to go bare a—rs—d, we should feel as little cold in our backside. As to our fine house, we built it very easily, as we have a hundred thousand livres a year of income, by houses in the same street."

So then ! you suffer me to die of hunger, while you have an income of an hundred thousand livres ! I suppose you pay fifty thousand of these to the new government.

"Heaven preserve us from paying a
"single

“single farthing ! It is only the produce
 “of the land cultivated by laborious
 “hands, callous with work, and moisten-
 “ed with tears, that owes taxes to the
 “legislative and executive power. The
 “alms which have been bestowed upon
 “us, have enabled us to build those
 “houses by the rent of which we get a
 “hundred thousand livres a year. But
 “these alms, coming from the fruits of
 “the earth, and having, consequently
 “already paid the tax, ought not to pay
 “twice; they have sanctified the faith-
 “ful believers, who have impoverished
 “themselves to enrich us, and we con-
 “tinue to beg charity, and to lay under
 “contribution the Faux-bourg of St.
 “Germain, in order to sanctify more of
 “the faithful believers.”—Having so said,
 the Carmelite shut the door in my face.

I then passed along and stopped before
 the *Hotel* of the *Mousquetaires gris*, and
 relating to those gentlemen, what had just
 happened to me, they gave me a good
 dinner and half-a-crown, (*un ecu.*) One of
 them proposed to go directly and set fire to
 the convent; but a musqueteer more dis-
 creet

creet than he, remonstrated to him that the time was not yet come, and begged him to wait a year or two first.

A U D I E N C E

OF THE

COMPTROLLER GENERAL.

I WENT, with my Half-crown, to present a petition to the Comptroller General, who was that day giving audience.

His antichamber was filled with people of all kinds. There were there especially some with more bluff faces, more prominent bellies, and more arrogant looks than my man of eight millions. I durst not draw near to them: I saw them, but they did not see me.

A monk, a great man for tythes, had a suit of law against certain subjects of the state whom he called his tenants. He had already a larger income than the half of his parishioners put together, and was moreover Lord of the Manor. His
claim

claim was, that whereas his vassals had, with infinite pains, converted their heaths into vineyards, they owed him a tythe of the wine, which, taking into the account the price of labour, of the vine-props, of the casks and cellaridge, would carry off above a quarter of the produce. But, said he, as the tythes are due, *Jure divino*, I demand the quarter of the substance of my tenants, in the name of God.

The minister of the revenue said to him, I see how charitable you are.

A farmer-general, extremely well-skilled in assessments, interposed, (saying,) Sir, that village can afford nothing to this monk; as I have, but the last year, made the parishioners pay thirty-two taxes on their wine, besides their over-consumption of the allowance for their own drinking, they are entirely ruined. I have seized and sold their cattle and moveables, and yet they are still my debtors. I protest then against the claim of the reverend father.

You are in the right, answered the minister of the revenue, to be his rival;
 you

you both equally love your neighbour,
and you both edify me.

A third, a monk and lord of the manor, whose tenants were in mortmain, was waiting for a decree of the council that should put him in possession of all the estate of a Paris-cockney, who, having inadvertently lived a year and a day in a house subject to this servitude, and inclosed within the lands of this priest, had died at the year's end. The monk was claiming all the estate of this cockney, and claiming it *jure divino*.

The minister found by this, that the heart of this monk was as just and as tender as that of the two first.

A fourth, who was a comptroller of the royal domains, presented a specious memorial, in which he justified himself for his having reduced twenty families to beggary. They had inherited from their uncles, their aunts, their brothers, or cousins; and were liable to pay the duties. The officer of the domain had generously proved to them, that they had not set the full value on their inheritance,
that

that they were much richer than they believed; and consequently having condemned them to a triple fine, ruined them in charges, and thrown the heads of the families into jail, he had bought their best possessions without untying his pursestrings.

The comptroller-general said to him, (in a tone indeed rather bitter,) *Euge, controleur bone et fidelis, quia supra pauca fuisti fidelis, fermier-general te constituam* (*). But to a master of the requests who was standing at his side, he said in a low voice; we must make these blood-suckers, sacred and prophane, disgorge: It is time to give some relief to the people, who, without our care, and our equity, would have nothing to live on in this

(*) I got a learned man of forty crowns, to explain these words to me, and I own they diverted me. It is a parody of the twenty-fifth verse of the twenty-fifth chapter of St. Matthew. *Well done, thou good and faithful comptroller; since thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee farmer-general.*

world,

world, at least, however, they might do in the other (†).

Some, of a profound genius, presented projects to him. One of them had imagined a scheme to lay a tax on wit. All the world, said he, will be eager to pay, as no-one cares to pass for a fool. The minister declared to him, I exempt you from the tax.

Another proposed to lay the *only* tax upon songs and laughing, in consideration that we were the merriest nation under the sun, and that a song was a relief and comfort for every thing. But the minister observed, that of late, there were hardly any songs of pleasantry made; and he was afraid that, to escape the tax, we should become too serious.

The next that presented himself, was a trusty and loyal subject, who offered to raise for the king three times as much, by making the nation pay three times less.

(†) A case nearly resembling this, came into existence in the province where I live, and the comptroller of the domain was forced to make restitution; but he was not punished.

The

The minister advised him to learn arithmetic.

A fourth proved to the king, in the way of *friendship*, that he could not raise above seventy-five millions, but that he was going to procure him two hundred and twenty-five. You will oblige me in this, said the minister, as soon as we shall have paid the public debts.

At length, who should appear, but a deputy of the new author, who makes the legislative power co-proprietor of all our lands, *jure divino*, and who was giving the king twelve hundred millions of revenue. I knew the man again who had flung me into prison, for my not having paid my twenty crowns, and throwing myself at the feet of the comptroller-general, I implored his justice ; upon which, he burst out a laughing, and telling me, it was a trick that had been played me, he ordered the doers of this mischief in jest to pay me a hundred crowns damages, and exempted me from the land-tax for the rest of my life. I said to him, God bless your honour !

L E T-

LETTER TO THE MAN OF FORTY CROWNS.

THOUGH I am three times as rich as you, that is to say, though I possess an income of three hundred and sixty livres, (about fifteen pounds,) I write to you as from equal to equal, without affecting the insolence of great fortunes.

I have read the story of your disaster, and of the justice done you by the comptroller-general; and congratulate you on it. But unfortunately, I have been just reading the *patriot-revenue-man*, notwithstanding the repugnance with which the title had inspired me; a title that seems to many to imply contradiction. This patriot takes from you twenty livres of your income, and from me sixty; he allows but a hundred livres a head to each individual, on the totality of the inhabitants. In recompence however of this, a not less illustrious person swells our in-

C

come

come to a hundred and fifty livres ; so that I see your geometrician has pitched upon a just medium. He is not, I find, one of those magnificent lords, who, with the stroke of a pen, people Paris with a million of inhabitants, and make you circulate fifteen hundred millions of hard specie in the kingdom, after all that we had lost in the last wars.

As you are a great reader, I will lend you the *Patriot-revenue-man*. But do not you believe him in every thing. He quotes the testament of that great minister Colbert, and does not know that it is a ridiculous rhapsody made by one Gatien de Courtils. He quotes the tything project of the marshal de Vauban, and does not know that it is the production of a certain Boisgilbert. He quotes the testament of cardinal Richelieu, and does not know that it is the work of the abbot de Bourzeis. He supposes that the cardinal assures, *that when the price of meat rises, the pay of the soldier is also raised*. And yet meat was, under his ministry, notably dearer than before, and the pay of the soldier was not augmented ; which proves, independently

independently of a hundred proofs, that this book, known and acknowledged to be supposititious, when it first appeared, and afterwards attributed to the cardinal himself, belongs no more to him, than the testaments of the cardinal Alberoni and of the marshal Belleisle, belong to them.

Ever, while you live, distrust testaments and systems. Like you, I have been the victim of them. If the modern Solons and Lycurguses have made their sport of you, the new Triptolemuses have yet made more a fool of me ; and had not it been for a small inheritance that revived me a little, I should have died of want.

I have a hundred and twenty acres of plowland in the finest country in nature, but the soil of them is one of the worst imaginable. Every acre returns me clear of all charges, in this country, no more than a crown of three livres. As soon as I had read in one of the Journals that a man celebrated for agriculture, had invented a new seed-machine, and that he sowed his ground, in beds, that by sowing less he might reap the more, I bor-

rowed quickly money, bought a seed machine, plowed in beds, and lost my money and trouble, as well as the illustrious author of that agriculture, who himself sows no longer by beds.

My ill fortune would have it that I should read the Oeconomical Journal, sold in Paris, at Boudot's. I chanced to light on the experiment of an ingenious Parisian, who, to divert himself, had made his parterre receive fifteen plowings, where he sowed corn, instead of planting it with tulips; and had a prodigious harvest. I have, thought I, nothing more to do than to bestow thirty plowings on my land, and I shall have double the harvest of that worthy Parisian, who had formed to himself his principles of agriculture, at the opera, and play-house, and I shall certainly be enriched by his lessons and example.

Four tilths only are in my country an impossibility; the severity and sudden changes of weather do not allow it: and besides, the misfortune I had had of sowing, by beds, like the forementioned illustrious adept in agriculture, had obliged

liged me to sell my plow-tackle, and beasts. I made my hundred and twenty acres be ploughed by all the ploughs within four leagues round. Three tilths for each acre cost twelve livres; it is the stated price. But my point was to bestow on each acre thirty dressings. The ploughing of each acre cost me 120 livres; so that my whole hundred and twenty acres stood me in their dressings 14,400 livres. My harvest, which, in my cursed country yields me, *communibus annis*, three hundred measures, amounted, I must confess, this year, to 330, which, at twenty livres the measure, produced to me six thousand six hundred livres; I lost seven thousand eight hundred livres. It is true I had the straw.

I should have been undone, ruined to all intents and purposes, but for an old aunt, whom a great physician dispatched to the other world, by his reasoning about as well in physic, as I had done in agriculture.

Who would now believe, that I should suffer myself to be again seduced by Boudot's Journal? After all, thought I,

that man could not have sworn particularly my ruin. I read in his Collection, that I need only to make an advance of four thousand livres, to procure myself an income of four thousand livres a year in artichokes. Well then, behold my four thousand livres expended, and my artichokes devoured by field mice. Upon which I was hooted at, all over the country, like Rabelais's poor devil of Papefiguiere.

I wrote a fulminating letter to Boudot. All the answer the miscreant made to it, was in his Journal to raise a laugh at my expence. He had too the impudence to deny that the Caribbeans were born red. I was obliged to send him the attestation of an antient king's council at Guadeloupe, to prove that God had made the Caribbeans red, and the Negroes black. But this little victory did not hinder my losing to the very last farthing of my aunt's inheritance, by my having believed in the new systems. My dear Sir, once more, take care of quacks of all kinds.

NEW

NEW GRIEFS

OCCASIONED BY

The NEW SYSTEMS.

The following little extract is taken from the manuscripts of an old man retired from the world.

I FIND that some loyal subjects have amused themselves with governing states, and with putting themselves in the place of kings, if others again have believed themselves Triptolemuses and Cereses; there are others yet more high-minded, who have, without ceremony, set themselves in the place of God, and who have created the universe with their pen, as the Almighty did of old with his word.

One of the first who presented himself to my adoration, was a descendant of Thales; under the name of Teliamed, who informed me that the mountains and men were produced by the waters of the sea. There were at

first, pretty marine men, who afterwards became amphibious. Their charming forked tails changed to thighs and legs. I had my head then, full of Ovid's metamorphoses, and of a book, in which it was demonstrated that the race of men was a bastard race of baboons. For my part, I had as lief descend from a fish as from a baboon.

In process of time I had some doubts about this same genealogy, and even on the formation of mountains. What! (said he) do not you know that the currents of the sea, which are for ever casting up sand, to the right and left, and to the height at most of ten or twelve feet, have produced, in an infinite series of ages, mountains of twenty thousand feet high, the which are not indeed of sand? Learn that the sea must absolutely have covered the globe. A proof of which is, that anchors of ships have been seen on the mountain of St. Bernard, which were there many ages before men had ships.

Figure to yourself that the earth is a *globe of glass* which was long covered with water. The more he urged his doctrine
to

to me, the more incredulous was I. What! (said he) have not you seen the *Fallun* of Touraine, which is thirty-six miles from the sea? It is a heap of shells, with which they enrich the ground as with any other manure. Now, if, in a succession of ages, the sea could deposite a whole mine of shells at thirty six leagues from the Ocean, why may it not, in the course of a number of ages, have gone so far as three thousand leagues on our globe of glass?

I answered him, Monsieur Tellamed, there are people who can walk fifteen miles a day; but they cannot walk fifty. I do not believe my garden is of glass; and as to your *Fallun*, I doubt as yet of its being a bed of sea-shells. It may be only a mine of calcarious stones, which easily take the form of shells, as there are stones which have the figure of tongues, and yet are not tongues; of stars, which are not stars; of coiled snakes which are not snakes; of women's sexual parts, which are not the spoils of ladies. One may see dendrites, and figured stones, which represent trees and houses, without those

little stones having been either oaks or houses.

If the sea had deposited so many beds of shells in Touraine, why would it have neglected Britany, Normandy, Picardy, and all the other coasts? I am sadly afraid that this so much boasted Fallun is no more made by the sea than men are. And even should the sea have diffused itself so far as thirty-six leagues, it does not follow that it should have gone so far as three thousand, or but three hundred leagues, and that all mountains have been produced by the waters. I had as lief say that the Caucasus had formed the sea, as pretend that the sea has made the Caucasus.

“ But, Mr. Incredulous, what will you say to the petrified oysters which have been found on the summit of the Alps?”

I would answer, Master Creator, I have no more seen petrified oysters than anchors of ships on the top of Mount Cenis. I would answer, as has already been said, that oyster-shells, (which, by the way, petrify very easily,) may have been
been

been found at great distances from the sea, as Roman medals have been dug up at a hundred leagues from Rome; and I would sooner believe that any pilgrims of St. James had left some shells towards St. Maurice, than I would imagine that the sea had formed the mountain of St. Bernard.

There are cockle-shells every where; but it is very sure that they are not as likely to be the spoils of the testaceous, and crustaceous kinds in our rivers, as of any little sea-fish?

“ Mr. Incredulous, I shall turn you in-
 “ to ridicule in the world which I propose
 “ to create.”

Great Creator, you need not have my leave for that: every one is the master of his own world; but you will never make me believe that the one in which we are is made of glass; or that some cockle-shells are demonstrations that the sea has produced the Alps and the mountain Taurus. You know there are no cockle-shells in the hills of America. It cannot then be you who created that hemisphere; you must have rested satisfi-
 ed

ed with creating the ancient world, and that is full enough.

——— “ Sir,--Sir, if there have not “ as yet been discovered shells on the “ mountains of America, there *will be*.”

——— Sir, this is talking like a creator, who knows his own secret, and is cocksure of his work. I leave you, if you please, your *Fallun*, so you will but leave me my mountains. As to any thing more, I am the most humble and most obedient humble servant of your foresight.

During the time that I was thus laying out for instruction with Teliamed, an Irish Jesuit in the disguise of a man, a great observer with all, and equipped with good microscopes, made some eels with the flour of damaged corn. Thence it was concluded, without doubt, that one might make men with the flour of good wheat. They immediately then created organical particles which composed men. And why not? The great geometrician, Fatio, had raised some from the dead in London; and surely it was quite as easy to make living men out of
of

of organical particles, at Paris ; but unhappily, the new eels of Needham having disappeared, the new men disappeared too, and took their flight among the monades which they met in the plenum in the midst of the subtile, globulous, and chambered matter.

It is not that these creators of systems have not done great services to natural philosophy ; Heavens forbid that I should despise their labors ! They have been compared to alchymists, who, while making gold, (which by the by is not to be made,) have hit upon good medicines, or discovered at least very curious things. One may be a man of extraordinary merit, and yet deceive ones self as to the formation of animals, and the structure of the globe.

The fish changed into men, and the waters into mountains, had not done me so much mischief as monsieur Boudot. I very contentedly confined myself then to doubting, when a Laplander took me under his protection. This was a profound philosopher, but who could never forgive those that were not of his opinion. The
first

first thing he did, was to make me see clearly into futurity, by exalting my soul. I made such prodigious efforts of exaltation, that I fell sick with the straining; but he cured me by plaistering me all over with resin, from head to foot. Scarce was I in a condition to walk, before he proposed to me a voyage to *Terra Australis*, to dissect the heads of giants, by which we should arrive at knowing clearly the nature of the soul. He made a great hole he dug in the terraqueous globe; which hole went directly to the Patagonians. We set off; but I broke my leg at the entrance of the hole, and it was not without great difficulty that I got it set again: a callus has formed on it, which has greatly relieved me.

I have already spoke of this in one of my diatribes for the instruction of the *Universe*, ever attentive to these great matters. I am now far advanced in years, and love to repeat sometimes my old stories, the better to beat them into the heads of the youngsters, for whom it is so long that I am at work.

M A R-

MARRIAGE

OF THE

MAN *of* FORTY CROWNS.

THE man of forty crowns had greatly formed his understanding, and having made a kind of little fortune, married a very pretty girl who had a hundred crowns a year of her own. His wife soon grew pregnant. Upon which he went to his geometrician, and asked him, Whether she would bring him a boy or a girl? The geometrician gave him for answer, that the midwives and nurses could commonly give a pretty good guess, but that the natural philosophers who foretell eclipses, were not so knowing as they.

He desired next to know, Whether his son or his daughter, be it which it might, had already a soul? The geometrician told him, that was not of his competence
to

to satisfy him, but that he might consult on it the divine at the corner-house.

The man of forty crowns, who was already the man of two hundred crowns at least, asked in what place his child was? In a little pocket, said his friend to him, between the bladder and the *intestinum rectum*. Heavenly father! cried he, what! the soul of my son born and lodged between urine, and something worse yet! — “Yes, dear neighbour, “the soul of a cardinal had no other cradle; and with all that, how proud! “and what airs do not men give themselves?”

O, most learned Sir, could not you tell me how children are got?

— “No, my good friend; but if “you please, I will tell you what philosophers have imagined, that is to say, “how children are not got.”

“First the reverend father Sanchez, in “his excellent book *de Matrimonio*, is entirely of Hippocrates’s opinion; he believes it, as an article of faith, that “the two fluid vehicles of the male and “female spirt out and unite together, and “that

" that it is in the moment of this union
 " that the child is conceived ; and so per-
 " suaded is he of this system of natural
 " philosophy become theological, that he
 " examines in the 21st chapter of his se-
 " cond book, *Utrum Virgo Maria semen*
 " *emiserit in copulatione cum Spiritu Sancto.*"

My good Sir, I have told you before
 that I do not understand a word of La-
 tin : pray, explain me in French the ora-
 cle of the father Sanchez. The Geome-
 trician translated to him the text, and
 both of them shuddered with horror.

The new married man, however,
 though he thought Sanchez prodigiously
 ridiculous, was satisfied well enough with
 Hippocrates ; and flattered himself that
 his wife fulfilled all the requisites set
 forth by that physician, for a child's be-
 ing got.

" Unhappily (said his neighbour) there
 " are many women who furnish no li-
 " quid, but who receive with nothing
 " but aversion the embraces of their hus-
 " bands, and yet have children by them.
 " This alone decides against Hippocrates
 " and Sanchez.

" Besides,

“ Besides, it is most likely that nature
 “ always acts in the same cases by the
 “ same principles. Now there are many
 “ species of animals who ingender with-
 “ out copulation, such as scaly fish, ois-
 “ ters, vinefretters. The natural philo-
 “ sophers were then obliged to look out
 “ for a mechanism of generation, that
 “ should account in common for that of
 “ all animals. The celebrated Harvey,
 “ who was the first that demonstrated the
 “ circulation, and who was worthy of
 “ discovering the secret of nature, thought
 “ he discovered it in fowls: they lay
 “ eggs; whence he judged that women
 “ laid them too. The wittlings said that
 “ this must be the reason why some cits,
 “ and even some of the court, called their
 “ wife or their mistress *ma poule* (*), and
 “ that the women were called coquettes,
 “ because they wanted the cocks to make
 “ love to them. In spite of these raille-
 “ ries, Harvey did not change his opini-
 “ on, and it became an established one

(*) There is no rendering this well into
 English.

“ over

“ over all Europe, that we came from an
“ egg.”

The Man of forty crowns.

But, Sir, you have told me, that nature is always resembling to herself; that she always acts by the same principle in the same case; now, women, mares, she-asses, eels, do not lay eggs. You are bantering me.

The Geometrician.

They do not lay eggs outwardly: they lay them inwardly. They have ovaries just as all birds have; mares and eels have them too. An egg detaches itself from the ovary; it receives its brooding in the matrix. Mark all the scaly fishes, the frogs, they eject their eggs which the male fecundates. The whales, and other sea-animals of that kind, make their eggs hatch in their matrix. Mites, moths, the vilest insects, are visibly formed out of an egg. Every thing comes from an egg; and our globe is one great egg which contains all the others.

The Man of Forty Crowns.

Nay, I must own, this system appears to have all the characters of truth; it is
simple,

simple, it is uniform, it stands demonstrated to the eye in above the half of the animal creation : in short, I am well satisfied with it ; I stick to this solution, and desire no other ; my wife's eggs are very dear to me.

The Geometrician.

People grew, at length, tired with this system ; and children were begotten, upon another plan.

The Man of Forty Crowns.

But why ? Since that one was so natural.

The Geometrician.

Because it has been pretended, that the women have no ovaries, but only small glands.

The Man of forty crowns.

I suspect that those who had another system to broach, wanted to discredit the eggs.

The Geometrician.

There may be something in that. Two Dutchmen took it into their head to examine the feminal liquid by a microscope, that of the man, and that of various other animals ; and they thought they perceived

ceived in them animals already quite formed, that moved with an inconceivable velocity. They saw some, even in the seminal fluid of the cock. Then it was judged that the males did every thing, and the females nothing ; these were no longer of any other service to generation, than to be the bearers of the treasure which the male had trusted to them.

The Man of forty crowns.

This seems to me very strange. I have some doubts concerning those little animals that frisk about so prodigiously in a liquid, to remain afterwards motionless (some few leaps excepted,) in the womb of the woman. This does not to me appear consequential ; it is not, as far as I can judge, the process of nature. Pray, be so good to tell me, what kind of make these little men are of, who are such good swimmers in the liquid you talk off ?

The Geometrician.

They are like worms. There was particularly, a physician called Andri, who saw worms every where, and whom
nothing

nothing would serve, but he would destroy Harvey's system. He would, if he could, have exploded the circulation of the blood, only because another had discovered it. In short, two Dutchmen, and monsieur Andri, by dint of falling into the sin of Onan, and of seeing things by a microscope, degraded man into a grub. Like that we are at first a worm; thence, under our cover, we become like that, for nine months, a true chrysalid. After which, the grub comes to be a butterfly, as we come to be men: such are our metamorphoses.

The Man of forty Crowns.

Well, then; was that opinion kept to? Has there been since no new fashion?

The Geometrician.

Men grew sick, at length, of this grub-origin. A philosopher, of great humour and pleasantry, has discovered, in his *Venus Physique*, that attraction begets children, and thus the thing is operated. The seed being fallen into the matrix, the right eye attracts the left eye, which sets off, to come and unite with it, in quality of eye, but is hindered by the
nose

nose which it meets by the way, and which obliges it to place itself on the left. So it is of the arms, of the thighs, and of the legs, which are set on to the thighs. On this hypothesis, it is not easy, however, to explain the situation of the breasts and buttocks. This great philosopher does not admit of any design, on the part of the Creator, in the formation of animals. He is far from believing that the heart was made to receive the blood, and to propell it, the stomach to digest, the eyes to see, the ears to hear ; this appears too vulgar to him ; with him ever thing is performed by attraction.

The Man of Forty Crowns.

He must be the prince of fools. I flatter myself, that no one could adopt so extravagantly absurd an idea.

The Geometrician.

It raised a great laugh ; but what was melancholic in it, was, that this mad-man resembled the divines, who, to the utmost of their power, persecute those whom they cause to laugh.

Other philosophers have imagined other modes of generation, which have not succeeded

succeeded better; according to some, it is not the arm that goes to meet the arm nor the thigh that seeks the thigh; it is small molecules, little particles of an arm, of a thigh, that place themselves one upon the other. We shall perhaps be obliged to return at length to our eggs, after having lost a great deal of time.

The Man of Forty Crowns.

I am glad of that. But what has been the result of all these disputes?

The Geometrician.

Doubt. If the question had been debated among divines, there would have been excommunications and bloodshed: but among natural philosophers, peace is soon made. Every one has lain with his wife, without any the least thought about her ovary, or the Fallopian tubes. The women have become big with child, without so much as asking how the mystery is operated. It is thus you sow your corn, without knowing the process of this seed under ground.

The Man of Forty Crowns.

Oh, that I know full well: I have been

been told it long ago : it is by its corruption. And yet I have sometimes a great mind to laugh at all I have been told.

The Geometrician.

And a very good mind it is. I would advise you to doubt of every thing, except the three angles of a triangle being equal to two right ones, or two triangles, which have the same basis and height being equal to one another, or of other the like propositions ; as, for example, that two and two make four.

The Man of forty crowns.

Yes : I hold it very wise to doubt : but I feel that my curiosity grows upon me, since that I have made my fortune. I could wish, when my will moves my arm or my leg, to discover that spring, and certainly there is one, by which my will moves them. I wonder sometimes why I can, at pleasure, lift or deject my eyes, and yet have not the like power to move my ears. I think, and, in the act of thinking, I wish I could know a little ... I mean there, to have my
D thought

thought palpable to me, to touch it, as it were. That would surely be very curious. I want to find out whether I think from myself, or whether it is God that gives me my ideas ; whether my soul came into my body at six weeks, or at one day old ; how it lodged itself in my brain ; whether I think much when in a profound sleep, or in a lethargy. I torture my brains to know how one body impels another. My sensations are not less matter of wonder to me ; I find something divine in them, and especially in pleasure. I have strove sometimes to imagine a new sense, but could never arrive at it. The Geometricians know all these things ; I wish you would be so good as to teach me.

The Geometrician.

Alas ! We are as ignorant of them as you are. Apply to the Sorbonne.

The

The MAN of FORTY CROWNS

BECOME A FATHER,

DESCANTS UPON THE MONKS.

AS soon as the man of forty crowns saw himself the father of a son, he began to think himself a man of some consequence in the state ; he hopes to furnish, at least, ten subjects to the king, who should all prove useful. He was himself the man in the world that made the best baskets, and his wife was an excellent sempstress. She was born in the neighbourhood of a rich abbé of a hundred thousand livres a year. Her husband asked me one day, why those gentlemen, who were so few in number, had swallowed so many of the forty crown lots ? Are they more useful to their country than I am ?—No, dear neighbour.—Do they, like me, contribute at least to the population of it ?—No, not to appearance, at least.—Do they cultivate the land ? Do they defend the state when it is attacked ?

D 2

—No,

—No, they pray to God for us.—Well then, I will pray to God for them, and let us go snacks.

How many of these useful gentry, men and women, may the convents in this kingdom contain ?

Ans. “ By the lists of the super-intendents, taken towards the end of the last century, there were about ninety thousand.”

According to our ancient account, they ought not, at forty crowns a head, to possess above eighteen millions eight hundred thousand crowns ; pray, how much have they actually ?

Ans. “ They have to the amount of fifty millions, including the masses, and alms to the mendicant monks, who really lay a considerable tax on the people. A begging friar of a convent in Paris publicly bragged that his wallet was worth fourscore thousand livres a year.”

Let us now consider how much the reparation of fifty millions among ninety thousand shaven crowns gives to each ?—Let us see, is it not 555 livres ?

Ans.

Ans. "Yes, a considerable sum it is in a numerous society, where the expences even diminish by the quantity of consumers; for ten persons may live together much cheaper than if each had his separate lodging and table."

So that the Ex-Jesuits, to whom there is now assigned a pension of four hundred livres, are then really losers by the bargain.

Ans. "I do not think so; for they are almost all of them retired among their friends, who assist them. Several of them say masses for money, which they did not do before; others get to be preceptors; some are maintained by female bigots; each has made a shift for himself: and, perhaps, at this time, there are few of them, who have tasted of the world, and of liberty, that would resume their former chains. The monkish life, whatever they may say, is not at all to be envied. It is a maxim well known, that the monks are a kind of people who assemble without knowing, live without loving, and die without regretting each other."

You think, then, that it would be doing them a great service to strip them of all their monk's habit ?

Ans. " They would undoubtedly gain much by it, and the state still more ; it would restore to the country a number of subjects, men and women, who have rashly sacrificed their liberty, at an age, in which the laws do not allow a capacity of disposing of ten pence a year income. It would be taking their corpse out of their tombs, and afford a true resurrection. Their houses might become hospitals, or be turned into places for manufactures. Population would be increased, all the arts would be better cultivated. One might at least diminish the number of these voluntary victims by fixing the number of novices. The country would have subjects more useful, and less unhappy. Such is the opinion of all the magistrates, such the unanimous wish of the public, since its understanding is enlightened. The example of England, and of other states, is an evident proof of the necessity of this reformation. What would England do at this time, if, instead
of

of forty thousand seamen, it had forty thousand monks? The more they are multiplied, the greater need there is of a number of industrious subjects. There are undoubtedly buried in the cloisters many talents, which are lost to the state. To make a kingdom flourish there should be the fewest priests, and the most artists possible. So far ought the ignorance and barbarism of our forefathers be from being any rule for us, that they ought rather to be an admonition to us, to do what they would do, if they were in our place, with our improvements in knowledge."

It is not then out of hatred to monks that you wish to abolish them, but out of love to your country. I think as you do. I would not have my son a monk. And if I thought I was to beget children for nothing better than a cloister, I would not lie with my wife again.

ANS. "Where, in fact, is that good father of a family that would not groan to see his son and daughter lost to society! "This is seeing the safety of the soul." May be so, but a soldier that seeks the safety of his body, when his duty is to

fight, is punished. We are all soldiers of the state; we are in the pay of society, we become deserters when we quit it. Deserters did I say only? The monks are parricides, who stifle a whole posterity. Ninety thousand of these cloistered bawlers and snufflers of Latin might surely give two subjects each to the state: this alone amounts to a hundred and eighty thousand men, whom they cause to perish in the seed. At a hundred years end the loss is immense; this stands demonstrated.

Why then has monkishness prevailed? Because, since the days of Constantine, the government has been every where absurd and detestable: because the Roman empire came to have more monks than soldiers: because there were a hundred thousand of them in Egypt alone; because they were exempt from labor and taxes; because the chiefs of those barbarous nations which destroyed the empire, having turned Christians, in order to govern Christians, exercised the most horrid tyranny; because, to avoid the fury of these tyrants, people threw themselves,
in

in crouds, into cloisters, and so to escape one servitude plunged themselves into another ; because the Popes, by instituting so many different orders of sacred drones, contrived to have so many subjects to themselves in other states ; because a peasant likes better to be called reverend father, and to give his benedictions, than to follow a plough's tail ; because he does not know that the plough is nobler than a monk's habit ; because he had rather live at the expence of fools, than by a laborious occupation ; in short, because he does not know, that in making a monk of himself, he is preparing for himself unhappy days, of which the sad ground work will be nothing but a *tædium vitæ* and repentance."

I am satisfied. Let us have no monks, for the sake of their own happiness, as well as ours. But I am sorry to hear it said by the landlord of our village, who is father to four boys, and three girls, that he does not know how to dispose of his daughters, unless he makes nuns of them.

D 5

Ans.

Ans. " This too often repeated plea is at once inhuman, detrimental to the country, and destructive to society. Every time that it can be said of any condition of life whatever, that if all the world were to embrace that condition, humankind would be lost ; it stands demonstrated that that condition is a worthless one, and that whoever embraces it does all the mischief to mankind that in him lies.

Now, it being a clear consequence that if all the youth of both sexes were to shut themselves up in cloisters, the world would perish ; monkery is, if it were but in that light alone, the enemy to human-nature, independently of the horrid evils it has formerly caused."

Might not as much be said as to soldiers ?

Ans. " Certainly not : for if every subject carried arms in his turn, as formerly was the practice in all republics, and especially in that of Rome ; the soldier is but the better farmer for it ; the soldier, as a good subject ought to do, marries, and fights for his wife and children.

Would

Would it were the will of Heaven that every laborer was a soldier and a married man! They would make excellent subjects. But a monk, merely in his quality of a monk, is good for nothing, but to devour the substance of his countrymen. There is no truth more generally acknowledged."

But, Sir, the daughters of poor gentlemen, who cannot fortune them off in marriage, what are they to do?

Ans. "Do! They would do, as has a thousand times been said, like the daughters in England, in Scotland, Ireland, Switzerland, Holland, half Germany, Sweden Norway, Denmark, Tartary, Turkey, Africa, and in almost all the rest of the globe. They will prove much better wives, much better mothers, when it shall have been the custom, as in Germany, to marry women without fortune. A woman industrious, and a good oeconomist, will do more good in a house, than the daughter of a farmer of the revenue, who spends more in superfluities than she will have brought of income to her husband.

There

There is a necessity for houses of retreat for old age, for infirmity, for deformity. But by the most detestable of all abuses, these foundations are for none but youth, and for well made persons. The initial step taken in a cloister, is to make the novices of both sexes show their nudity, against all the laws of modesty; they are examined attentively behind and before. Let a hump-backed old woman present herself, to enter into a cloister, and she will be rejected with contempt, unless she will give an immense portion to the house. But what do I say? Every nun must bring her dower with her; she is else the refuse of the convent. Never was there a more intolerable abuse."

Thank you, Sir; I swear to you that no daughter of mine shall be a nun. They shall learn to spin, to sew, to make lace, to embroider, to render themselves, in short, useful. I look on the vows of convents to be crimes against ones country and one's self.

Now, Sir, I beg you will explain to me, how comes it that one of my friends, in contradiction to human kind, pretends that

that monks are useful to the population of a state, because their buildings are kept in better repair than those of the nobility, and their lands better cultivated?

Ans. " Bless me! Who can this be that advances so strange a proposition?"

It is the *friend of mankind* (*) or rather the friend of the monks.

Ans. " He has had a mind to divert himself; he knows but too well, that ten families, who have each two thousand livres a year in land, are a hundred, nay a thousand times more useful than a convent that enjoys fifty thousand livres a year, and which was always a secret hoard. He cries up the fine houses built by the monks, and it is precisely those fine houses that provoke the rest of the subjects; it is the very cause of complaint to all Europe. The vow of poverty condemns those places, as the vow of humility protests against pride, and as

(*) Monsieur le M. de Mirabeau, in his book, entitled *L'Ame des Hommes*. It is against this Marquess that the jest on the *only tax* is levelled; a tax proposed by him.

the vow of extinguishing one's race is in opposition to nature."

I begin to think it adviseable to be very distrustful of books.

ANS. "The best way is to make use with regard to them, of the same caution as with men; chuse the most reasonable, examine them, and never yield unless to evidence."

On TAXES paid to a FOREIGN POWER.

ABOUT a month ago, the man of forty crowns came to me, holding both his sides, which he seemed ready to burst with laughing. In short, he laughed so heartily, that I could not help laughing too, without knowing at what. So true it is, that man is born an imitative animal, that instinct rules us, and that the great emotions of the soul are catching.

Ut ridentibus arrident, ita flentibus adflent (*), *Humani vultus*.

(*) The jesuit of Sanadon, for *adflent* has put *adfunct*. A lover of Horace pretends, that it was for this that the jesuits were expelled.

When

When he had had his laugh well out, he told me that he had just come from meeting with a man who called himself the prothonotary of the Holy See, and that this personage was sending away a great sum of money, to an Italian three hundred leagues off, in the name and behalf of a Frenchman, on whom the king had bestowed a small fief or fee; because the said Frenchman could never enjoy this benefit of the king's conferring if he did not give to his Italian the first years income.

The thing, said I, is very true, but is not quite such a laughing matter either. It costs France about four thousand livres a year, in petty duties of this kind; and in the course of two centuries and a half that this custom has lasted, we have already sent to Italy fourscore millions.

Heavenly father! (he exclaimed) How many forty crowns would that make! Some Italian then subdued us, I suppose, two centuries and a half ago, and laid that tribute upon us!

In good faith! answered I, he used to impose on us, in former times, in a much more burthensom way. That is but a trifle, in comparison of what, for

a long time, he leived on our poor nation, and on the other poor nations of Europe. Then I related to him how those holy usurpations had taken place, and came to be established ; he knows a little of history, and does not want for sense ; he easily conceived that we had been slaves, and that we were still dragging a little bit of our chain that we could not get rid of. He spoke much, and with energy, against this abuse, but with what respect for religion in general ! With what reverence did he express himself for the bishops ! How heartily did he wish them many forty crowns a year, that they might spend them in their dioceses in good works.

He also wished that all the country-vicars might have a number of forty crowns, that they might live with decency. It is a sad thing, said he, that a vicar should be obliged to dispute with his flock for two or three sheaves of corn, and that he should not be amply paid by the country. These eternal contestations for imaginary rights, for the tithes, destroy the respect that is owing to them.

The

The unhappy cultivator who shall have already paid to the collectors his tenth penny, and the two pence a livre, and the tax, and the capitation, and the purchase of his exemption from his lodging soldiers after that he shall have lodged soldiers, for this unfortunate man, I say, to see the vicar take away moreover the tithe of his produce, he can no longer look on him as his pastor, but as one that flays him alive, that tears from him the little skin that is left him. He feels but too sensible, that while they are, *jure divino*, robbing him of his tenth sheaf, they have the diabolical cruelty not to give him credit for all that it will have cost him to make that sheaf grow. What then remains to him for himself and family? Tears, want, discouragement, despair, and thus he dies of fatigue and misery. If the vicar was paid by the country, he would be of comfort to his parishioners, instead of being looked upon as an enemy.

This worthy man melted as he uttered these words; he loved his country, and the public good was his idol. He would sometimes

sometimes emphatically say, "What a nation would the French be if it pleased!"

We went to see his son, to whom the mother, a very neat and clean woman, was presenting a fine white breast distained with milk. Alas! said the father, here thou art, poor child, and hast nothing to pretend to but twenty three years of life, and forty crowns a year!

On P R O P O R T I O N S.

THE produce of the extremes is equal to the produce of the means: but two sacks of corn stolen, are not to those who stole them, as the loss of their lives is to the interest of the person from whom they were stolen.

The prior of ***, from whom two of his domestic servants in the country had stolen two measures of corn, has just had the two delinquents hanged. This execution has cost him, more than his harvest has been worth to him, and since that time he has not been able to get a servant.

If

If the laws had ordained that such as stole their Master's corn should work in his grounds, for their lives, in fetters, and with a bell at their neck, fixed to a collar, the prior would have been a considerable gainer by it.

“Terror should be preventively employed against crimes:” very true: but work on compulsion and lasting shame, strike more terror than the gallows.

There was some months ago, at London, a malefactor who had been condemned to be transported to America, to work there at the sugar works with the negroes. In England, any criminal, as in many other countries, may get a petition to be hanged, alledging that he mortally hated work, and that he had rather bear strangling, for a minute, than to make sugar all his life-time.

Others may think otherwise: every one to his taste; but it has been already said, and cannot be too often repeated, that a man hanged is good for nothing, and that punishments ought to be useful.

Some years ago, in Tartary, two young men were condemned to be impaled

ed for having, (without taking off their caps,) stood to see the procession of the Lama pass by. The emperor of China, who is a man of very good sense, said, that for his part, he should have condemned them to walk bare-headed, in the procession, any time for three months afterwards.

Proportion punishments to crimes, says the marquis Beccaria ; those who made the laws were not geometers.

If the Abbot Guyon or Cogé, or the ex-jesuit Nonotte, or the ex-jesuit Patouillet, or the minister La Beaumelle, compose miserable libels, in which there is no truth, nor reason, nor wit, would you go to have them hanged as the prior of D*** had his servants? And hanged under pretext that calumniation is worse criminals than thieves?

Would you condemn even Freron to the galleys, for his having made a practice of lying, all his life-time, in the hope of paying his score at a public-house?

Would you put the sieur Larcher into the pillory, because he has been a very heavy writer ; because he has heaped errors

rors upon errors ; because he was never capable of distinguishing any degree of probability ; because he will have it, that in an immense city, renowned for its police, and for the jealousy of husbands, in Babylon, in short, where the women were under the guards of eunuchs, that all the princesses went, out of devotion, to bestow publicly their favors, in the cathedral, on strangers for money ? Let us content ourselves with sending him to the spot, in quest of such gallantries : let us keep to moderation in every thing ; let us establish a proportion between crimes and punishments.

Let us forgive that John-James (Roufseau) when he writes but to contradict himself ; when after his having given a comedy, hissed off the theatre at Paris, he censures those who have plays acted a hundred leagues off that town ; when he lays out for patrons and abuses them ; when he declaims against romances and writes romances, of which the hero is a silly preceptor, who receives charity from a Swiss girl whom he has got with child, and who goes to spend her money at a
bawdy-

bawdy-house in Paris ; let us leave him to his thinking that he has surpassed Fenelon and Xenophon in his plan of educating a young man of quality in the trade of a joiner : these insipid absurdities do not deserve a warrant to take him into custody ; the cells of Bedlam are sufficient, with some good broths, breathing a vein, and a proper regimen.

I hate the laws of Draco, which punished equally crimes and faults, wickedness and folly. Do not let us treat the Jesuit Nonotte, who is only guilty of writing nonsense and abuse, as the Jesuits Malagrida, Oldcorn, Garnet, Guignard, and Gueret were treated, or as the Jesuit Tellier ought to have been treated, who deceived his king, and disturbed all France. Let us, especially in all litigations, in all dissensions, in all quarrels distinguish the aggressor from the party offended, the oppressor from the oppressed. An offensive war is the procedure of a tyrant ; he who defends himself is in the character of a just man.

As I was absorbed in these reflections, the man of forty crowns came to me all

in tears. I asked with emotion, if his son, who was by right to live twenty-three years, was dead ? No, said he, the little one is very well, and so is my wife; but I was summoned to give evidence against a miller, who has been put to the torture, ordinary and extraordinary, and who has been found innocent : I saw him faint away under redoubled tortures ; I heard the crash of his bones ; his outcries and screams of agony are not yet out of my ears ; they haunt me ; I shed tears for pity, and shudder with horror. His tears drew mine, I trembled too like him, for I have naturally an extreme sensibility.

My memory then represented to me the dreadful fate of the Calas family ; a virtuous mother in irons, her children in tears and forced to fly, her house given up to pillage, a respectable father of a family broken with torture, agonizing on a wheel, and expiring in the flames ; a son loaded with chains, and dragged before the judges, one of whom said to him, "*We have just now broke your father*

*"ther on the wheel, we will break you alive
" too."*

I remembered the family of Sirven, which one of my friends met with among the mountains covered with ice, as they were flying from the persecution of a judge as ignorant as he was unjust. This judge (he told me) had condemned a whole innocent family to death, on a supposition, without the least shadow of proof, that the father and mother, assisted by two of their daughters, had cut the throat of the third, and drowned her besides, for fear of her going to Mass. I saw, in judgments of this kind, at once, an excess of stupidity, of injustice, and of barbarity.

The man of forty crowns joined with me in pitying human nature. I had in my pocket the discourse of an attorney-general of Dauphiny, which turned upon very important matters. I read to him the following passages.

*" Certainly those must have been truly
" great men, who, the first, dared to
" take upon them the office of governing
" their fellow-creatures, and to set their
" shoulders*

“ shoulders to the burthen of public wel-
 “ fare ; who for the sake of the good they
 “ meant to do to men, exposed themselves,
 “ to their ingratitude ; and for their repose
 “ renounced their own ; who made them-
 “ selves, as one may say, middle-men
 “ between their fellow-creatures and Pro-
 “ vidence, to compose for them, by arti-
 “ fice, a happiness which Providence
 “ seems otherwise to have refused to them
 “ by any other means.

“ What magistrate, ever so little sensi-
 “ ble to his duties, and but to humanity
 “ alone, could bear such ideas ? Could
 “ he, in the solicitude of his closet, with-
 “ out shuddering with horror and with
 “ pity, cast his eyes on those papers, the
 “ unfortunate monuments of guilt or
 “ of innocence ? Should he not think he
 “ hears a plaintive voice and groans issue
 “ from those fatal writings, and press
 “ him to decide the destiny of a subject,
 “ of a husband, of a father, or of a whole
 “ family ? What judge can be so unmer-
 “ ciful (if he is charged but with one sin-
 “ gle criminal process) as to pass in cold

E

“ blood

“ blood before the door of a prison ? Is it
 “ I (must he say to himself) who detain in
 “ that execrable place my fellow-creature,
 “ perhaps my countryman, one of human-
 “ kind, in short ? Is I that confine him
 “ every day ; that shut those execrable
 “ doors upon him ? Perhaps despair will
 “ have already seized him ; he sends up
 “ to heaven my name loaded with his
 “ curses, and doubtless calls to witness
 “ against me that great Judge of the
 “ world, who observes us, and will judge
 “ us both.

“ Here a dreadful sight presents itself on
 “ a sudden to my eyes : the judge, tired
 “ with interrogating by words, has re-
 “ course to interrogation by tortures. Im-
 “ patient in his inquiries and researches,
 “ and perhaps irritated at their inutility,
 “ he has brought to him torches, chains,
 “ leavers, and all those instruments inven-
 “ ted for putting to pain. An executi-
 “ oner comes to interpose in the functions
 “ of magistracy, and terminates by vio-
 “ lence an interrogation begun by liber-
 “ ty.

“ Gentle

“ Gentle Philosophy ! Thou who never
 “ seekest truth but with attention and pa-
 “ tience, couldst thou expect, in an age
 “ that takes thy name, that such instru-
 “ ments would be employed to discover
 “ that truth ?

“ Can it be really true, that our laws
 “ approve this inconceivable method, and
 “ that custom consecrates it ?

“ Their laws imitate their prejudices ;
 “ their public punishments are as cruel
 “ as their private vengeance, and the
 “ acts of their reason are scarce less un-
 “ merciful than those of their passions.
 “ What can be the cause of this strange
 “ contrariety ? It is because our prejudi-
 “ ces are antient, and our morality new ;
 “ it is because we are inattentive to our
 “ ideas ; it is because our passion for
 “ pleasures hinders us from reflecting on
 “ our wants, and that we are more eager
 “ to live than to direct ourselves right ;
 “ it is, in a word, because our morals
 “ are gentle without being good ; it is,

“because we are polite, and are not so much as humane.”

These fragments, which eloquence had dictated to humanity, filled the heart of my friend with a sweet consolation. He admired with tenderness. What! said he, are such master-pieces as these produced in a province? I had been told, that Paris was all the world, or the only place in it.

It is, said I, the only place for producing comic operas; but there are, at this time, in the provinces, magistrates, who think with the same virtue, and express themselves with the same force. Formerly the oracles of justice, like those of morality, were nothing but matter of mere ridicule. Dr. Balordo declaimed at the bar, and Harlequin in the pulpit. Philosophy is at length come, and has said, “Do not speak in public, unless to set forth new and useful truths with the eloquence of sentiment, and of reason.”

But, say the praters, if we have nothing new to say, what then? Why, hold your tongues, replies Philosophy; all those vain discourses, for parade, that contain

contain nothing but phrases, are like the fire on the eve of St. John's, kindled on that day of the year, in which there is the least want of it to heat oneself: it causes no pleasure; and not so much as the ashes of it remain.

Let all France read good books. But notwithstanding all the progresses of the human understanding, there are few that read, and among those who sometimes seek instruction, the reading of the most part is very ill chosen. My neighbours, men and women, pass their time after dinner, at playing an English game, which I have much difficulty to pronounce since they call it Whist. Many good citizens, many thick heads, who take themselves for good heads, tell you with an air of importance, that books are good for nothing. But, Messieurs the Welches, do not you know that you are governed only by books? Do not you know that the Statutes, the Military Code, and the Gospel, are books on which you continually depend? Read; improve yourselves; it is reading alone that invigorates the

E 3 understanding;

understanding: conversation dissipates it, play contracts it.

I have very little money, (answered me the man of forty crowns,) but If ever I make any thing of a fortune, I will buy my books at M * * *.

On the P O X.

THE man of forty crowns lived in a little retired nook of the country where no soldiers had been ever quartered, or in garrison, for above a hundred and fifty years before. The morals in that unknown corner of the world were as pure as the air they breathe in it. It was not so much as known there that love could elsewhere be infected with a destructive poison; that generations were attacked in their very source, and that Nature, in contradiction to herself, could render tenderness detestable, and pleasure dreadful: they might give a loose to love with all the security of innocence. Troops came and every thing was changed.

Two

Two lieutenants, the chaplain of the regiment, a corporal, a private recruit, who was just come out of the seminary for breeding subjects for the church, were enough to poison, as they did, twelve villages in three months. Two female cousins of the man of forty crowns saw themselves covered with callous pustules; their fine hair came off; their voice turned hoarse; the eyelids of their heavy deadened eyes took a livid colour, nor would now any longer shut to let repose into dislocated limbs, which a secretaries was beginning to corrode like those of the Arabian Job, though Job had never had that distemper.

The surgeon-major of the regiment, a man of great experience, was obliged to ask assistants of the court to cure all the girls in the country. The minister of war, always led by inclination to relieve the fair sex, sent a recruit of young surgeons, who spoiled on one hand, as fast as they restored on the other.

The man of forty crowns was reading, at that time, the Philosophical History of Candide, translated from the German by

Dr. Ralph, which evidently proves that every thing is right, and that it was absolutely *impossible* in the best of worlds *possible*, that the pox, the plague, the stone, the gravel, the king's evil, the chamber of Valentia, the inquisition should not enter into the composition of the universe, of that universe solely made for man, the king of animals, and the image of God, whom it is plainly seen, he resembles, like two drops of water.

He was reading in the true History of Candide, that the famous Dr. Pangloss had, while under cure for the pox, lost an eye and an ear. Alas! said he, must my poor cousins be one-eyed, or short of an ear? No! said the consolatory major, the Germans have, indeed, a rough, heavy hand; but we! we cure girls speedily, safely, and agreeably.

And accordingly, the two pretty cousins came off with having their head swelled, like a blown bladder, for six weeks, with losing the half of their teeth, while their tongue was drawn half a foot out of their mouths, and with dying of bad lungs at six months end.

During

During the operation the cousin and the surgeon-major entered into the following discussion.

The Man of Forty Crowns.

Can it, sir, be possible, that Nature can have annexed such dreadful torments to so necessary a pleasure? So great a shame to so great an honor, and that there should be more danger in the act of begetting a child, than in that of killing a man? It is true for our comfort, that this scourge diminishes a little on the face of the earth, and that it becomes daily less dangerous?

The Surgeon-major.

On the contrary, it spreads more and more all over Christian Europe; it has extended itself into Siberia. I have myself seen fifty persons of note die of it; and especially a great general of an army, and a very grave minister of state. Few people of a weak constitution of the lungs can hold out against the disease and the remedy. The two sisters, the great and the small one, have leagued themselves more effectually than even the monks, for the destruction of human kind.

The Man of Forty Crowns.

A fresh reason this for abolishing the monks, in order that restored to their rank of men, they may help a little to repair the mischief done by the two sisters. Pray, tell me, have the brute animals the pox ?

The Surgeon-major.

Neither the great nor the small one ; and monks are unknown to them.

The Man of forty crowns.

It must be confessed then, that they are happier and wiser than we are in this best of worlds.

The Surgeon-major.

I never made a doubt of it : they are liable to fewer diseases than we ; their instinct is much surer than our reason : never does the past or the future torment them.

The Man of forty crowns.

You have been surgeon to the French ambassador in Turkey, is the pox very rife at Constantinople ?

The Surgeon.

The Christians or Franks, as they call them, have brought it into the sub-
urb

urb called Pera ; where they live. I knew a capuchin there, who was as much eaten up with it as Pangloss ; but it has not got into the town itself ; the Franks hardly ever lying in it. There are scarce any public prostitutes in that immense town. Every rich man has wives, or Circassian slaves, constantly guarded, and watched, and whose beauty can never be dangerous. The Turks call the pox the Christian disease, and this redoubles their profound contempt for our system of divinity. But then in recompence, they have the plague that Egyptian distemper, which they never give themselves any trouble to prevent.

The Man of forty crowns.

About what time do you think it was that this scourge began in Europe ?

The Surgeon.

At the return from the first voyage made by Christopher Columbus, among innocent people, who neither knew avarice nor war ; towards the year 1494. These simple and just nations were liable to this disorder from time immemorial, as the leprosy reigned among the Arabs, and

and the plague among the Egyptians. The first fruit which the Spaniards gathered from this conquest of the new world was the pox : this spread itself more quickly than the money from Mexico, which did not circulate in Europe till long afterwards. The reason of which is that in all the towns there were notorious public-houses called brothels, established by authority of government for the better preservation of the honour of the ladies. The Spaniards carried the infection into these privileged houses from which the princes and bishops used to get what girls they needed for their own use. It has been remarked, that at Constance there were seven hundred and eighteen girls for the service of that council which so devoutly consigned John Huss and Jerom of Prague to the flames.

By that circumstance alone you may judge with what rapidity the distemper diffused itself over all countries. The first great man who died of it, was the most illustrious and reverend father in God, the bishop and viceroy of Hungary, in 1499, whom Bartholomew Montagna-

na, a great physician, was not able to cure. Gualtieri assures us that the archbishop of Mentz, *Bertboldus of Henneberg*, being seized with the great pox, gave up his soul to the Lord, in 1504. It is well known that our king Francis I. died of it, and that Henry III. caught it at Venice, but the Jacobin, James Clement, prevented the effect of the distemper.

The parliament of Paris, ever zealous for the public good, was the first that made an ordinance against the pox, forbidding all that were poxed to remain in Paris, *under penalty of being hanged*. But as it was not easy to prove judicially to the men and women inhabitants of that good city, that they were in the case of the law, the ordinance took no more effect than those that were made against the emetic; and notwithstanding the authority of parliament, the number of the guilty proceeded augmenting. Certainly it is, that if they had been ordered to undergo an exorcism, or conjuring, instead of their being to be hanged, there would not, at this day, be any poxed on the face

face of the earth; unluckily, no body ever thought of it.

The Man of forty crowns.

Pray is it true what I have read in *Candide*, that among us, when two armies, of thirty thousand men each, march together under their respective banners, a wager may be laid that there are twenty thousand poxed on each side?

The Surgeon-major.

It is but too true. The same may be said of the licentiates of Sorbonne. What would you have young students or bachelors do, to whom nature dictates in a louder, firmer tone than divinity? I can safely swear to you that, allowing for proportion, my fellow-surgeons and I have under our hands more young priests than young officers.

The Man of forty crowns.

Could no way be thought of to extirpate, in some manner, this contagion that makes such havock in Europe? It has already been tried to weaken the poison of one pox, might not there be an attempt at something of that kind on the other?

The

The Surgeon.

There could be but one way, and that is, that all the princes of Europe should enter into a league against it, as in the times of Godfrey of Boulogne. Surely, a crusade against the pox would be much more reasonable than those in former times, so unfortunately undertaken against Saladin, Malech-Sala, and the Albigenes. It would be better for the powers of the earth to come to a good understanding, in order to repel this common enemy of human kind, than to be continually taken up with spying the favourable moment for the devastation of countries, and for covering the fields with dead bodies, for the sake of wresting from a neighbour two or three towns or a few villages. I am now speaking against my interest, for the war and the pox are my livelihood and fortune; but one ought to be a man before one is a surgeon major.

Thus it was that the Man of forty crowns proceeded forming, as one may say, his head, and his heart. He not only succeeded to the inheritance of his

two

two fair cousins aforesaid, who had died at the six months end, but he came also to a fortune left by a very distant relation, who had been a sub-farmer of the military hospitals, where he had fattened himself on the strict abstinence to which he had put the wounded soldiers. This man would never marry: but kept a very pretty seraglio. He never would own any of his relations, lived in the height of debauchery, and died at Paris, of a surfeit. He was, as any one may see, a very useful member of the state.

Our new philosopher was obliged to go to Paris to get possession of the inheritance of his relation. At first, the farmers of the domain disputed it with him. He had the good luck to gain his cause, and the generosity to give to the poor of his neighbourhood in the country, who had not their contingent of forty crowns a year, a part of the spoils of the deceased son of fortune. After which, he set himself about satisfying his passion for having a library.

He read every morning, and made extracts: on the evening he consulted the
 learne

learned to know in what language the serpent had talked to our good mother; whether the soul is in the callous body, or in the pineal gland; whether St. Peter lived five and twenty years at Rome; what specific difference there is between a throne and a domination; and why the Negroes have a flat nose? He proposed to himself, besides, never to govern the state, nor to write any pamphlet against new dramatic pieces. He was called Mr. Andrew, which was his christian name. Those who have known him do justice to his modesty and to his qualities, as well acquired as natural. He has built a commodious house on his old little landed property of four acres. His son will soon be of age to go to college; but he proposes to send him to the college of Harcourt, and not to that of Mazarin, on account of the professor Cogé who makes libels, and because it is not quite so decent for a professor of a college to make libels.

Madam Andrew has brought him a very pretty girl, whom he hopes to marry to a counsellor of the court of Aids, provided

provided that magistrate has not the disease which the surgeon-major is for extirpating out of Christian Europe.

A GREAT QUARREL.

DURING the stay of Mr. Andrew at Paris, there happened a very important quarrel. The point was, to decide whether Marcus Antoninus was an honest man, and whether he was in Hell, or in Purgatory, or in Limbo in waiting, till the day of resurrection. All the men of sense took the part of Marcus Antoninus. They said, Antoninus has been always just, temperate, chaste, beneficent. It is true he has not so good a place in Paradise as St. Anthony; for proportion ought to be observed, as has been before recommended. But certainly the soul of Antoninus is not roasting on a spit in Hell. If he is in purgatory he ought to be delivered out of it; there need only be masses said for him. Let the Jesuits, who have no longer any thing to do, say three thousand masses for the repose of the soul of Marcus Antoninus.

Putting

each mass at fifteen pence, they will get two hundred and fifty livres by it. Besides, some respect is owing to a crowned head; he should not be lightly damned.

The party opposed to these good people, pretended, on the contrary, that no compounding for salvation ought to be allowed to Marcus Antoninus; that he was an heretic. That the Carpocratians and the Alogi were not so bad as he; that he had died without confession; that it was necessary to make an example; that it was right to damn him, if but to teach better manners to the emperors of China and Japan, to those of Persia, Turkey, and Morocco; to the kings of England, Sweden, Denmark, Prussia, to the stadtholder of Holland, to the avoyers of the canton of Berne, who no more go to confession, than the emperor Marcus Antoninus; that in short, there was an unspeakable pleasure in passing sentences against dead sovereigns, when one could not fulminate them against them in their life-time, for fear of losing one's ears.

This

This quarrel became as serious as was formerly that of the Ursulines and the Annonciades, who disputed which could carry eggs in the shell longest, without breaking them between their posteriors. In short, it was feared that it would come to a schism, as in the time of the hundred and one mother Goose's tales, and of certain bills payable to the bearer in the other world. To be sure a schism is very terrible; the meaning of the word is a division in opinion, and till this fatal moment all men had been agreed to think the same thing.

Mr. Andrew, who was an excellent member of society, invited the chiefs of the two parties to sup with him. He is one of the best companions that we have; his humour is gentle and lively; his gaiety is not noisy; he is open, frank, and easy; he has not that sort of wit which seems to aim at stifling that of others; the authority which he conciliates to himself, is due to nothing but his graceful manner, to his moderation, and to a round good natured face, which is quite persuasive. He could have brought to
sup

sup chearfully together, a Corfican and a Genoese, a representative of Geneva and negative-man, the muphti and an archbishop. He managed so dextrously, as to make the first strokes that the disputants of both parties aimed at each other, fall to the ground, by turning off the discourse, and by telling a very diverting tale, which pleased equally the damning and the damned. In short, when they had got a little matter or so, good humoured and elevated with wine, he made them sign an agreement, that the soul of Marcus Antoninus should remain in *statu quo*, that is to say, no body knows where, till the day of final Judgment.

The souls of the doctors of divinity returned quietly to their limbos, after supper, and all was calm. This adjustment of the quarrel did great honour to the man of forty crowns; and since then, when ever any peevish, virulent dispute arose among men of letters, or among not men of letters, the advice given to both parties, was, *Gentlemen, go and sup at Master Andrew's.*

I know

I know of two inveterate factions, who, for want of having been to sup at Master Andrew's, have drawn upon themselves great mischiefs.

A R A S C A L repulsed.

THE reputation which Mr. Andrew had acquired for pacifying quarrels, in giving good suppers, drew upon him last week a singular visit. A dark complexioned man, shabbily enough dressed, rather crook-backed, with his head leaning towards one shoulder, a haggard eye, and his hands very dirty, came to entreat of him to invite him to a supper with his enemies.

Who are your enemies? said Mr. Andrew, and who are you? Alas, Sir, said he, I am forced to confess that I am taken for one of those wretches that compose libels to get bread, and who are for ever crying out, God,—God,—God,—Religion,—Religion, in order to come at some little benefice. I am accused of having calumniated some of the most truly religious subjects, the most sincere adorers

adorers of the Divinity, and the honestest men of the kingdom. It is true, fir, that, in the heat of composition, there often fall from the pen of those of my trade, certain little inadvertences or slips, which are taken for gross errors, and some liberties taken with the truth, which are termed impudent lies. Our zeal is looked upon in the light of a horrid mixture of villainy and fanaticism. It has been acknowledged, that while we were insnaring the easy faith of some silly old women, we are the scorn and execration of all the men of worth that can read.

My enemies are the principal members of the most illustrious academies of Europe, writers much esteemed, and beneficent members of society. I have but just published a book under the title of *Antiphilosophical*. I had nothing but the best intentions, and yet no-one would buy my book. Those to whom I made presents of it, threw it into the fire, telling me it was not only anti-reasonable, but anti-christian, and extremely anti-decent.

Well,

Well, then ! said Mr. Andrew to him, follow the example of those to whom you presented your libel, throw it into the fire, and let no more be said of it : I applaud much your repentance, but it is not possible I can make you sup with men of wit, who can never be your enemies, since they will never read you.

Could not you, sir, at least, (said the hypocrite to him,) reconcile me with the relations of the deceased Monsieur de Montesquieu, to whose memory I have offered an indignity, that I might give honour and glory to the reverend father Rout, who came to besiege his last moments, and who was turned out of the room ?

Zounds ! said Mr. Andrew, the reverend father Rout has been dead this long time; go and sup with him.

Mr. Andrew is a rough kind of a man when he has any thing to say to any of this wicked and foolish set. He felt in himself, that this hypocritical rascal wanted to sup at his house with persons of merit, only that he might engage a dispute with them, in order to go afterwards
and

and calumniate them, to write against them, and to print fresh lies. He drove him then from his house, as Rout had been driven out of the apartment of the president of Montesquieu.

There is no deceiving easily Mr. Andrew: The more simple, and natural he had been while he was the man of forty crowns, the more was he become circumspect, since he was better acquainted with mankind.

F

The

The GOOD SENSE

O F

Mr. ANDREW.

BUT how greatly did the sense of Mr. Andrew improve in vigour from the time that he had got a library! He lives with books as with men; he is curious in his choice of them; and is never the bubble of names. What a pleasure it is to gain instruction, to enlarge one's mind for half-a-crown, without stirring out of the house!

He congratulates himself on his being born in a time when the human reason begins to tend to perfection. How unhappy should I have been (he used to say) if the age I live in, had been that of the Jesuit Garasse, of the Jesuit Guignard, of the Doctor Boucher, of the Doctor Aubry, of the Doctor Winchester; or if my time had been that in which they used to
condemn

condemn to the gallies, those who wrote against the categories of Aristotle?

Distress had weakened the springs of Mr. Andrew's soul, good fortune had restored to them their elasticity. There are thousands of Andrews in the world, to whom nothing has been wanting but a turn of the wheel of fortune in their favour, to make of them men of true merit.

He is now competently acquainted with all the affairs of Europe, and especially with the progresses of the human understanding.

It was but last Tuesday that he was saying to me, that REASON travels, by slow journeys, from north to south, in company with her two intimate friends EXPERIENCE and TOLERATION. AGRICULTURE and COMMERCE attend them. Reason presented herself in Italy, but the congregation of the Index repulsed her. All that she could do, was to send secretly one of her agents, who, in spite of all her enemies, do some good. Let but some years more pass, and it is to

be hoped that the country of the Scipios will be no longer that of Harlequins in monks habits.

She has from time to time, met with cruel foes in France ; but she has so many friends in that kingdom, that she stands a good chance of becoming at length, first minister there.

When she presented herself in Bavaria and Austria, she found two or three great wig-blocks that stared at her with stupid and astonished eyes. Their greeting was, " Madam, we never heard of you ; we " do not know you."—Her answer which was, " Gentlemen, in time you will come " to know me, and love me. I have been " well received at Berlin, at Moscow, at " Copenhagen, at Stockholm. It is long " ago, that by the credit of Locke, of " Gordon, of Trenchard, Lord Shaftesbury, and a number of others of the " same nation, that I have been naturalized by act of parliament of England. " You will, some day or other, confer on " me the like grant. I am the daughter

“ter of TIME, I expect every thing from
“my father.”

When she passed the frontiers of Spain and Portugal, she blessed God on observing that the fires of the inquisition were no longer kindled so often; she conceived great hopes on seeing the Jesuits expelled; but was afraid, that while the country was cleared of the foxes, it was still left exposed to the wolves.

If she makes any fresh attempts to gain entrance into Italy, it is thought she will begin by establishing herself at Venice; and that she will take up her abode in the kingdom of Naples, in spite of the liquefaction of the saint's blood in that country, which gives her the vapours. It is pretended, that she had an infallible secret for untying the strings of a crown, which are entangled, nobody knows how, in those of a mitre, and for hindering the palfries from going any more to make a curtesy to the mules.

In short, the conversation of Mr. Andrew entertained me much; and the more I see of him, the better I like him.

The GOOD SUPPER

At MR. ANDREW'S.

WE supped yesterday together with a doctor of Sorbonne, with Monsieur Pinto, the celebrated Jew, with the Chaplain of the Protestant chapel of the Dutch Embassaor, the Secretary of the Prince Galitzin of the Greek church, a Calvinist Swiss Captain, two Philosophers, and three Ladies of great wit.

The supper was a very long one, and yet there was no more disputing upon religion than as if not one of those at table had ever had any; so polite it must be owned we are grown; so much is one afraid at supper to give any cause of offence to one's brethren. It is not so with the Regent Coge, and the Ex jesuit Patouillet, and with all the animals of that kind. Those pitiful creatures will say more of stupidly abusive things in one pamphlet of two pages, than the best company in Paris can say agreeable and instructive

instructive ones in a supper of four hours. And what is stranger yet, they dare not tell a man to his face, what they have the impudence to print.

The conversation turned at first on a piece of pleasantry in the Persian Letters, in which it is repeated after a number of grave personages that the world does not only proceed growing worse, but that it is daily dispeopling, so that if the proverb should have any truth in it, that *the more fools there are the more laughter*, laughing is likely to be soon banished from the face of the earth.

The Doctor of Sorbonne assured us, in fact, that the world was almost reduced to nothing. He quoted the father Petavius, who demonstrates that in less than three hundred years, one only of the sons of Noah (I forget whether it was Shem or Japhet) had procreated a series of children; that amounted to six hundred and twenty three thousand six hundred and twelve millions three hundred and fifty eight thousand true believers, with-

in two hundred and eighty five years after the universal deluge.

Mr. Andrew asked why in the time of Philip de Bel, that is to say, about three hundred years after Hugh Capet, there were not six hundred and twenty three thousand millions of princes of the royal family? It is (said the Doctor of Sorbonne) because the stock of faith is much fallen.

A great deal was said about Thebes and its hundred gates, and of the million of soldiers that issued out of those gates, with the twenty thousand chariots of war. Shut the book there, said Mr. Andrew; since I have taken to reading, I begin to suspect that the same genius that wrote *Garagantua*, used of yore to write all the histories.

But, in short, said one of the company, Thebes, Memphis, Babylon, Niniveh, Troy, Seleucia, were great cities once, and now no longer exist. Granted, answered the Secretary of the Prince Galitzin, but Moscow, Constantinople, London, Paris, Amsterdam, Lyons, which is better

better than ever Troy was, all the towns of France, Germany, Spain, and the North were then deserts.

The Swiss Captain, a gentleman of great knowledge, owned to us, that when his ancestors took it into their heads, to quit their mountains and their precipices, to go and take forcible possession, as was but reasonable, of a finer country, Cæsar, who saw with his own eyes the list of those emigrants, found that their number amounted to three hundred and sixty eight thousand, inclusive of the old, the children and the women. At this time the single canton of Berne possesses as many inhabitants, which is not quite the half of Switzerland, and I can assure you, that the thirteen cantons have above seven hundred and twenty thousand souls, taking into the account the natives who are serving or carrying on business in other countries. After that, gentlemen of learning go and make calculations and systems, on no better footing, and they will be equally all false.

The question next agitated was, Whether the citizens of Rome, in the time of the Cæsars, were richer than the citizens of Paris, in the time of Monsieur Silhouette?

Oh, says Mr. Andrew, this is a point on which I have some call to speak. I was a long time the man of forty crowns; I can, however readily believe, that the citizens of Rome had more. Those illustrious robbers on the highway had pillaged the finest countries of Asia, of Africa, and Europe. They lived very splendidly on the produce of their rapines; but yet there were doubtless some beggars at Rome. I am persuaded that, among those conquerors of the world, there were some reduced to an income of forty crowns a year, as well as I was formerly.

Do you know, said a learned member of the Academy of Inscriptions and *Belles Letters*, that it cost Lucullus for every supper he gave in the saloon of Apollo, thirty-nine thousand three hundred and twelve livres of our current money, but that

that Atticus, yes, the celebrated Epicurean Atticus, did not expend above two hundred and thirty livres a month for his table?

If that be true; said I, he deserved to be president of the Miser-society, lately established in Italy. I have read, as you have done, in Florus, that incredible anecdote; but, perhaps, Florus had never supped with Atticus, or that his text, like so many others, has been corrupted by copyists. No Florus shall ever make me believe that the friend of Cæsar and of Pompey, of Cicero and of Antony, all of whom were often entertained at his house, got off for something less than ten Louis d'ors a month.

But, thus exactly 'tis that history's written.

Madam Andrew, for her part, told the learned Member of the Academy, that if he would keep her table for ten times as much she would be much obliged to him.

I am persuaded, that this evening at Mr. Andrew's stood in as much as the month of Atticus. As for the Ladies, they

they expressed a doubt, whether the suppers of Rome were more agreeable than those of Paris. The conversation was very gay, though a little leaning to the learned. There was no talk of new fashions, nor of the ridiculous parts of any one's character, or conduct, nor of the scandalous history of the day.

The question upon luxury was discussed and searched to the bottom. It was mooted, whether or not luxury had been the ruin of the Roman empire; and it was proved that the two empires of the East and West had owed their destruction to nothing but religious controversies, and to the monks; and in fact, when Alaric took Rome, its whole attention was engrossed by theological disputes; when Mahomet took Constantinople the monks defended much better the eternity of the Tabor, which they saw on their navel, than they defended the town against the Turks.

One of our men of learning made a remark that very much struck me. It was that those two great empires were annihilated,

annihilated, and that the works of Virgil, Horace, and Ovid still subsist.

From the age of Augustus, they made but one skip to the age of Lewis the XIVth. A lady put the question, why it was that with a great deal of wit there was no longer produced scarcely any work of genius?

Mr. Andrew answered, that it was because such works had been produced in the last age. This idea was fine-spun, and yet solidly true: it bore a thorough handling. After that they fell with some harshness upon a Scotchman, who had taken it into his head to give rules to taste, and to criticise the most admirable passages of Racine without understanding French (*). But there was one Denina much

(*) This Mr. Home, a lord of the sessions in Scotland, teaches the manner of making the heroes of a tragedy speak with wit, and here follows a remarkable specimen, which he quotes from the tragedy of Hen. IVth, by the divine Shakespeare. This divine Shakespeare introduces my Lord Falstaff, the chief justice
who

much more severely treated, who had abused Montesquieu's Spirit of Laws, without

who has just taken prisoner the knight Sir John Colvile, whom he presents to the king.

*"Sir, here he is, and I beseech your Grace,
 "let it be booked with the rest of the day's deeds,
 "or, by the Lord, I will have it in a particular
 "ballad with my own picture on the top of it,
 "Colvile kissing my foot, to which course if I be
 "enforced, if you do not shew like gilt two-pen-
 "ces to me, and I in the clear sky of Fame o'er-
 "shine you as much as the full moon does the cin-
 "ders of the element, which shew like pins beads
 "to her, believe not the word of the noble. There-
 "fore let me have right, and let desert mount."*

2d Part of Henry the Fourth, A& IV.

Scene VI.

It is this absurd and abominable gallimaufrey very frequent in the divine Shakespeare, that Mr. Home proposes for the model of good taste, and of wit, in tragedy. But, in recompence, Mr. John Home thinks the Iphigenia and Phedra of Racine extremely ridiculous.

NOTE

without comprehending him, and who has especially censured what is most liked and approved in that work.

This recalled to my mind Boileau's making a parade of his affected contempt for Tasso. One of the company advanced that Tasso, with all his faults, was as superior to Homer, as Montesquieu, with

NOTE of the translator on the foregoing.

Nothing could equal the absurdity so falsely imputed to Shakespeare, except the blunder so justly imputable, on this occasion, to the author, who has mistaken a humorous buffoon, for a lord chief justice of England: a mistake into which I fancy he must have been led by seeing in the *Dramatis Personæ*, the name of Sir John Falstaff immediately under the Lord Chief Justice, which has made him confound two personages so very different. There is another considerable error, Colevile is presented by Falstaff not to the king, but to Prince John of Lancaster. The French translation too is grossly false and defective. In short, the whole tenor of the above note is liable to very just objections; but it would be want of respect to the reader, to enter upon them, they are so obvious.

with all his still greater imperfections, was above the farrago of Grotius. But there was presently a strong opposition made to these false criticisms, dictated by national hatred and prejudice. The Signor Denina was treated as he deserved, and as pedants ought to be by men of wit.

It was especially remarked, with some sagacity, that the greatest part of the literary works of this age, as well as of the conversations, turned on the examinations of the master-pieces of the last century; in which we are like disinherited children, who are taking an estimate of their father's estate. It was confessed that philosophy had made great progresses, but that the language and style were somewhat corrupted.

It is the nature of all these conversations to make transitions from one subject to another. All these objects of curiosity, of science, and of taste, soon vanished, to give way to the great scene which the Empress of Russia, and the King of Poland, were giving to the world. They had

had been just raising up and restoring the rights of oppressed humanity, and establishing liberty of conscience in a part of the globe of a much greater extent than ever was the Roman empire. This service done to human kind, this example given to so many Courts that think themselves wondrous political, was mentioned with the applause it deserved. Healths were drank to the philosophical Empress, to the royal Philosopher, and to the philosophical Primate, with the wish of their having many imitators. Even the Doctor of Sorbonne admired them, for there are some persons of good sense in that body, as there were formerly, some men of wit among the Boeotians.

The Russian Secretary astonished us with a recital of the great establishments they were forming in Russia. It was asked, why people were in general more fond of reading the history of Charles the XIIth, who passed his life in destroying, than that of Peter the Great, who consumed his in creating? On this we concluded, that weakness, and a frivolous
turn

turn of mind, are the cause of this preference; that Charles the XIIth was the Don Quixot, and Peter the Solon of the North; that superficial understandings prefer a wild extravagant heroism, to the great views of a legislator: that the particulars of the foundation of a town are less pleasing to them, than the rashness of a man, who, at the head of only his domestics, braves an army of ten thousand Turks; and that, in short, most readers love amusement better than instruction. Thence it is, that a hundred women read the thousand and one Arabian nights, for one that reads two chapters of Locke.

What was not talked of at this supper, of which I shall long retain the remembrance? It was also in course to say a word of the actors and actresses, that eternal subject of the table-talk of Versailles and of Paris. It was agreed, that a good declaimer was as rare as a good poet. The supper ended with a very pretty song, which one of the company made for the ladies. As for me, I

own

own, that Plato's banquet could not have given me more pleasure than that of monsieur and madam Andrew.

Our very pretty gentlemen, and our very fine ladies, would, doubtless, have found it dull, and been tired with it: they pretend to be the only good company, but neither Mr. Andrew nor I ever sup with that kind of good company.

F I N I S.

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